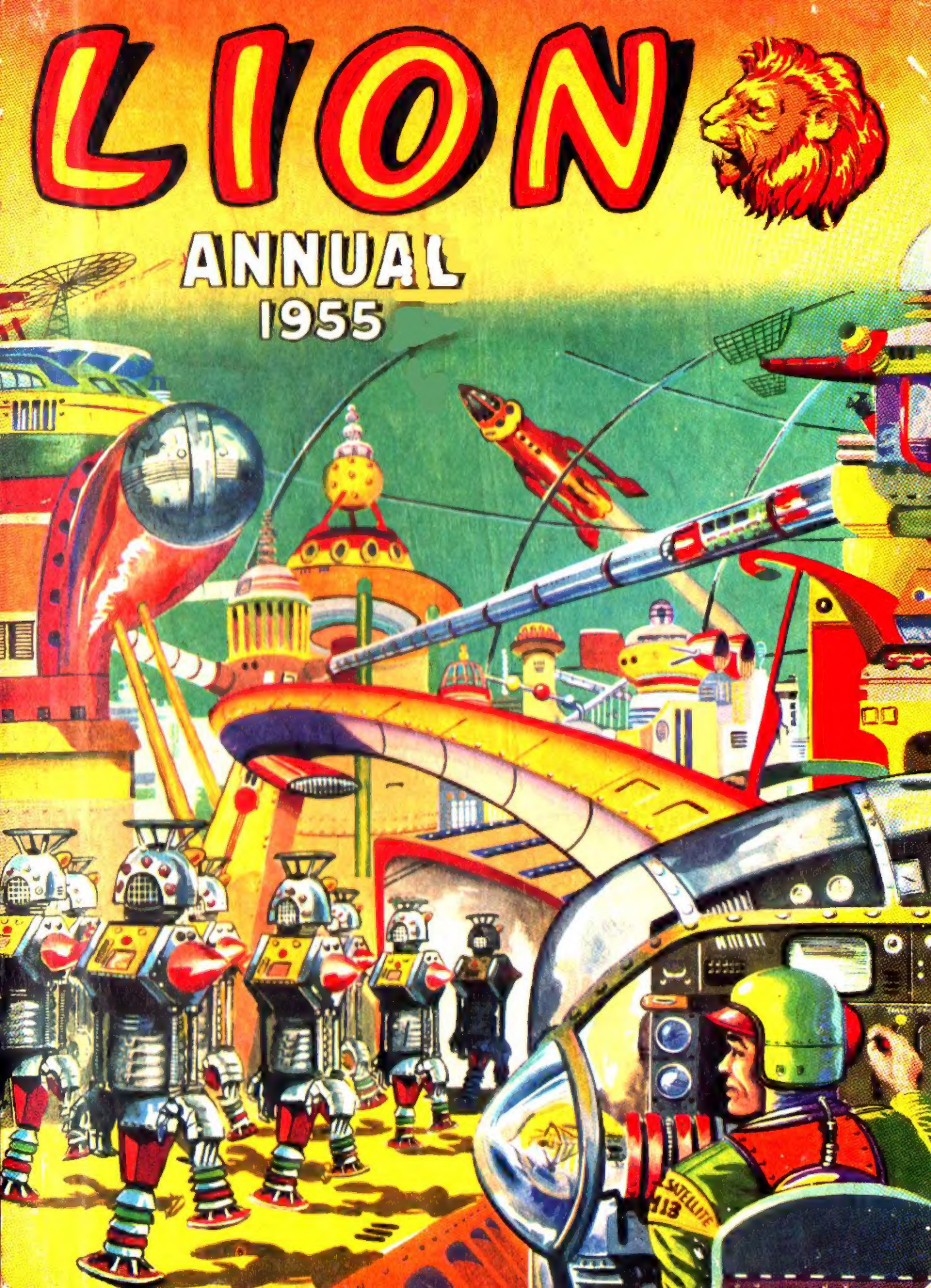
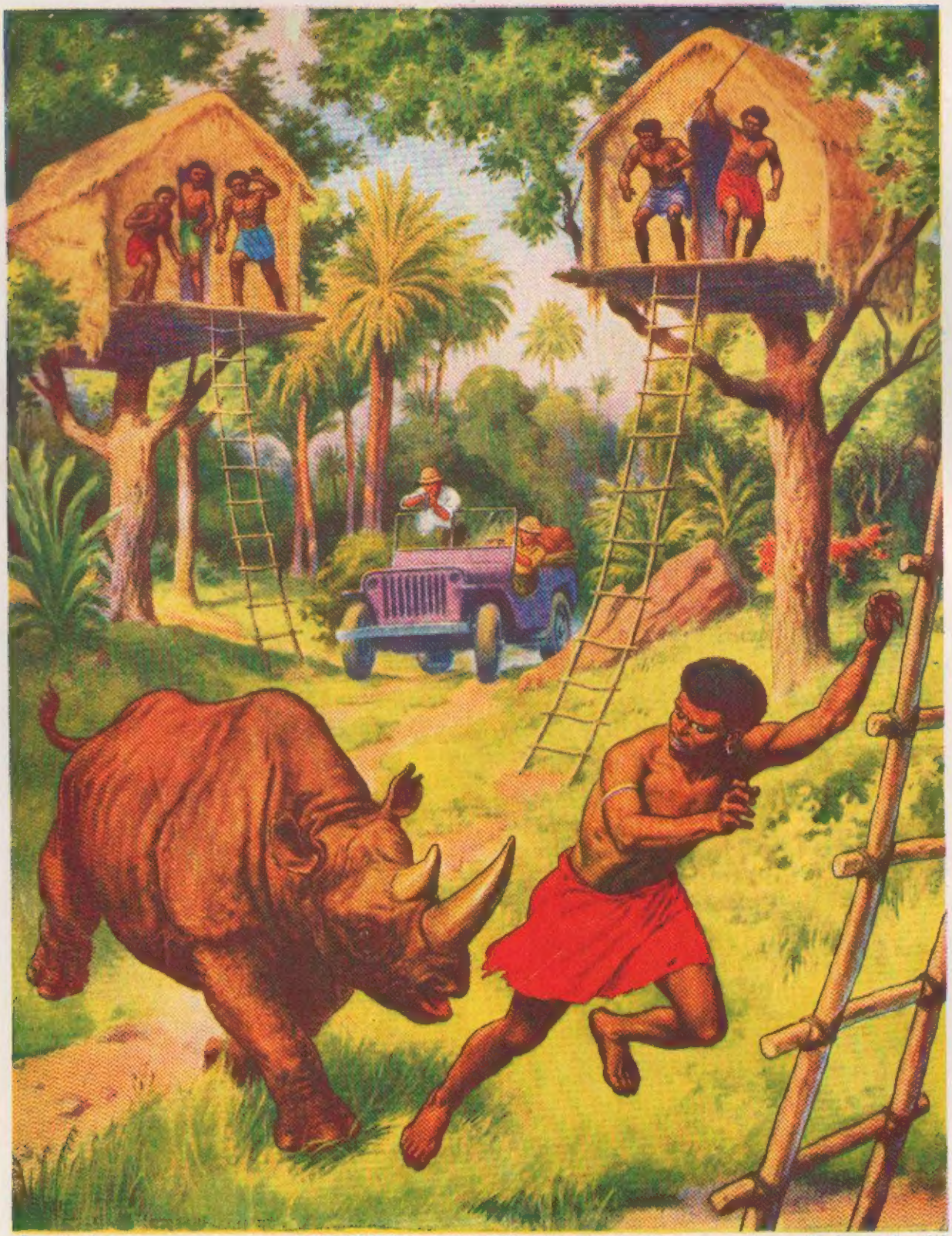
LION

ANNUAL

1955





Frontispiece

REX FIGHTS THE JUNGLE MENACE

See Story on Page 112

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Issued from
THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.4

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CAPTAIN CONDOR and the ROBOT SPACE-MEN

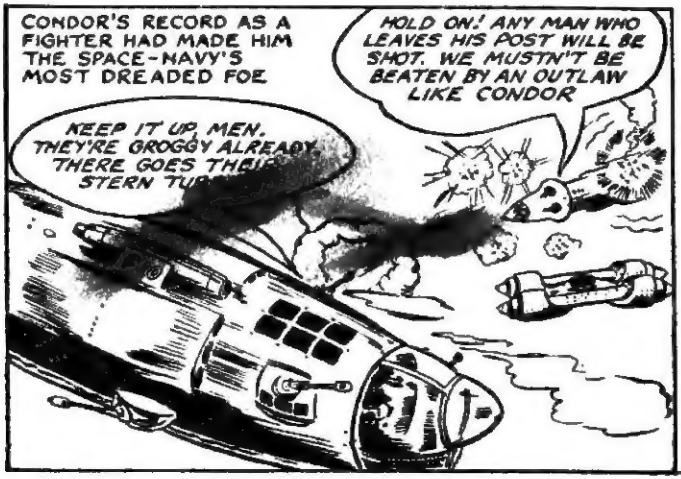
BY Frank S. Pepper

CAPTAIN CONDOR WAS A SPACE PILOT IN THE YEAR 3000. WHEN OUTLAWED BY THE RUTHLESS DICTATOR OF THE PLANETS, HE AND HIS COMRADES ESCAPED TO AN UNCHARTED MOON CALLED ZOR. THERE THEY BUILT A SECRET HEADQUARTERS. ONE DAY THEY LEARNT THAT THE DICTATOR HAD ARRESTED ANOTHER BAND OF MEN WHO DARED TO DEFY HIM, AND WAS SENDING THEM TO THE TERRIBLE SUN-BAKED DESERTS OF MERCURY. CONDOR AT ONCE DECIDED TO ATTEMPT TO RESCUE THEM FROM THE TRANSPORT IN WHICH THEY WERE BEING CARRIED

WITH THE AID OF RADAR, CAPTAIN CONDOR LOCATED THE TRANSPORT MIDWAY BETWEEN EARTH AND MERCURY. HE AND HIS PAL, PETE, EAGERLY WATCHED IT THROUGH THE NAVIGATION WINDOW OF THEIR SPACE-SHIP
THERE SHE IS, PETE. AND I'LL BET EVERY ONE OF THOSE FOUR MAIN CABINS IS JAMMED TO SUFFOCATION WITH MEN WHO HAD THE PLUCK TO FIGHT THE DICTATOR
BUT SHE'S GOT A CRUISER ESCORT, CAPTAIN. WE DIDN'T BARGAIN FOR THAT!

UNDAUNTED, CONDOR TURNED HIS SPACE-SHIP TOWARDS THE GREAT WARSHIP
THAT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE, PETE. THOSE PRISONERS WERE CONDEMNED BECAUSE THEY DEFIED THE DICTATOR. WE WON'T LET THEM DOWN. GIVE THE ORDER - "ACTION STATIONS FOR AN ATTACK"

ABOARD THE DICTATOR'S CRUISER —
BY JUPITER, IT'S CONDOR'S SHIP! HE MUST BE PLANNING A RESCUE. HE'S COMING FOR US AT FULL SPEED
SOUND THE COMBAT ALARM. ORDER THE TRANSPORT TO STAND CLEAR


CONDOR'S RECORD AS A FIGHTER HAD MADE HIM THE SPACE-NAVY'S MOST DREADED FOE
HOLD ON! ANY MAN WHO LEAVES HIS POST WILL BE SHOT. WE MUSTN'T BE BEATEN BY AN OUTLAW LIKE CONDOR
KEEP IT UP, MEN. THEY'RE GROGGY ALREADY. THERE GOES THEIR STERN TUR

CONDOR'S GUNNERS, HOWEVER, FOUGHT MAGNIFICENTLY. MORE AND MORE DIRECT HITS WERE SCORED ON THE CRUISER. AND SUDDENLY CONDOR GAVE A SHOUT OF TRIUMPH
HURRAH! THEY'VE HAD ENOUGH, LADS -- THEY'RE RUNNING AWAY! WELL DONE, EVERYONE!

CONDOR LED A BOARDING PARTY ON TO THE TRANSPORT, WHERE THE PRISONERS GREETED HIM WITH WILD EXCITEMENT. THEIR GUARDS SURRENDERED WITHOUT A FIGHT
AS COMMANDER I AM SURRENDERING MY SHIP TO YOU, CAPTAIN CONDOR STRAY SHELLS HAVE CAUSED QUITE A LOT OF DAMAGE, AND A NUMBER OF MY CREW ARE WOUNDED
THANK YOU, COMMANDER. I WILL TAKE OVER
AFTER A QUICK LOOK ROUND, CONDOR HAD THE WOUNDED AND THE CAPTURED CREW TRANSFERRED TO HIS OWN SPACE-SHIP, AND ORDERED IT TO BE FLOWN AT TOP SPEED TO ZOR. HE AND PETE, WITH A SQUAD OF ENGINEERS, STAYED ON THE TRANSPORT. IN ITS DAMAGED STATE IT WOULD HAVE TO BE DRIVEN AT HALF-SPEED. IT WAS AFTER THE OTHER SPACE-SHIP HAD GONE THAT PETE RUSHED UP TO CONDOR
CAPTAIN--I'VE GOT BAD NEWS! THE FUEL TANKS WERE MORE BADLY DAMAGED THAN WE THOUGHT. VIBRATION HAS NOW MADE THEM LEAK LIKE SIEVES!
CONDOR HURRIED ALONG WITH PETE TO INSPECT THE MAIN TANK
PHEW! THIS LOOKS BAD. HOW MUCH FUEL HAVE WE LEFT?
I CAN'T SAY FOR SURE--MOST OF THE GAUGES ARE OUT OF ACTION
CONDOR AND PETE EXAMINED THE TANKS ONE BY ONE WELL KNOWING THAT A SURE SUPPLY OF FUEL WAS A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH TO THE SHIP
IT'S EVEN WORSE THAN I FEARED. LANDING SAFELY ON ZOR IS ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE WITH THE LITTLE FUEL WE'VE GOT. WHATEVER CAN WE DO, CAPTAIN?
I KNOW ONE POSSIBLE WAY OUT. THERE'S A FUEL SUPPLY ON THE ARTIFICIAL MOON M.13. WE'LL LAND THERE. WE COULD BE THERE IN NINE HOURS
CONDOR'S SUGGESTION BROUGHT A GASP FROM PETE
BUT M.13 IS ONE OF THE DICTATOR'S NAVAL DEPOTS. IT'S ARMED TO THE TEETH. WE'D EITHER BE CAPTURED OR BLOWN TO BITS
WITHOUT FUEL THIS SHIP IS A DEATH TRAP. IF WE CAN REACH M.13 IT WILL AT LEAST GIVE US A CHANCE
CONDOR RETURNED TO THE NAVIGATION DOME, WHERE HE BEGAN TO LAY HIS PLANS
HERE'S YOUR COURSE. KEEP US HEADED FOR M.13 WHILE I ORGANISE THE REPAIR OF THOSE FUEL TANKS

THE ARTIFICIAL MOON KNOWN AS M.13 WAS USED AS A SUPPLY BASE FOR NAVAL SPACE-CRUISERS. IT WAS ARMED TO BEAT OFF THE MOST POWERFUL ATTACKS. ALREADY DETECTORS HAD PICKED UP CONDOR'S SHIP, AND ORDERS WERE BEING BROADCAST

ATTENTION, M.13 DEFENDERS. UNIDENTIFIED SHIP ENTERING OUR AREA. IT MAY BE THE TRANSPORT REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN CAPTURED BY CAPTAIN CONDOR. BE ON GUARD FOR POSSIBLE ATTACK

M13

WHEN CHALLENGING SIGNALS SENT OUT FROM M.13 TO THE APPROACHING SHIP WENT UNANSWERED, THE COMMANDER OF THE ARTIFICIAL MOON ISSUED EMERGENCY MEASURES

ORDER THE TROK-LEADERS AND GREB-LEADERS TO ASSEMBLE IN THE BRIEFING ROOM. I'LL SPEAK TO THEM ON THE TELECASTER

EM4 UP4

M.13 WAS GARRISONED MAINLY BY ELECTRONIC MECHANICAL MEN. THOSE USED AS MECHANICS WERE CALLED GREBS. THE LABOUR SQUADS WERE CALLED TROKS. BUT BOTH GREBS AND TROKS COULD BE EMPLOYED AS FIGHTING TROOPS. EACH PLATOON HAD A HUMAN LEADER

TROK

GREB

THE PLATOON LEADERS, EACH ATTENDED BY A TROK OR GREB, GATHERED IN THE BRIEFING ROOM. THEY COULD SEE THE COMMANDER'S FACE ON THE TELECASTER

THE APPROACHING SHIP IS UNDOUBTEDLY PILOTED BY CAPTAIN CONDOR. I KNOW OF ONLY ONE REASON WHY HE SHOULD COME HERE--THAT IS TO GET FUEL. SO THIS IS OUR CHANCE TO CAPTURE HIM

MEANWHILE, CONDOR HAD BEEN BUSY IN THE WORKSHOP OF THE SPACE-TRANSPORT. HE HAD CLEVERLY MADE SOMETHING WHICH, WHEN FINISHED, HE SHOWED TO PETE

HOW DO YOU LIKE THIS FELLOW?

SUFFERING SATELLITES! WHAT IN THE NAME OF SATURN IS IT?

I'VE MADE IT TO LOOK LIKE ONE OF THE MECHANICAL MEN I SAW ON M.13 YEARS AGO. ACTUALLY IT'S HOLLOW--BUT I'M GOING TO GET INSIDE IT SO AS TO AVOID BEING RECOGNISED WHEN I LAND

CONDOR HAD MADE HIS PLANS WELL. HE INTENDED TO STOP THE SPACE-TRANSPORT WHEN IT WAS STILL A GOOD DISTANCE FROM M.13 RATHER THAN RISK ITS DESTRUCTION BY THE DEFENDERS. A REMOTE-CONTROLLED PATROL BOAT WOULD THEN BE PACKED WITH ELECTRONIC TRANSMITTERS, AND SENT IN THE DIRECTION OF THE ARTIFICIAL MOON. THE TRANSMITTERS WERE SPECIALLY CONSTRUCTED TO JAM THE DEFENDERS' LOCATORS. CONDOR WOULD THEN BE ABLE TO APPROACH M.13 UNDETECTED IN ANOTHER PATROL BOAT

WHEN THE REMOTE-CONTROLLED BOAT HAD BEEN SENT ON ITS WAY, CONDOR PREPARED TO SET OFF IN THE SECOND BOAT. BESIDE HIM WAS THE DUMMY MECHANICAL MAN
REMEMBER, PETE, YOU ARE TO STAY WELL OUT OF RANGE
OKAY, CAPTAIN. BUT I'D RATHER BE GOING WITH YOU!
A MOMENT LATER CONDOR WAS ON THE WAY TO M. 13
IF THIS COMES OFF, YOU AND I ARE IN FOR AN EXCITING TIME, MY DUMMY FRIEND!
BEFORE LONG, IN THE CONTROL ROOM OF M.13 THE COMMANDER AND HIS ASSISTANTS WERE GAZING AT THEIR INSTRUMENTS IN BEWILDERMENT
THERE'S SOMETHING QUEER OUT THERE. IT'S A DEVICE THAT'S JAMMING OUR LOCATORS
SUDDENLY THE DEFENDERS SPOTTED THE CAUSE OF THE TROUBLE. NONE KNEW THAT IT WAS THE PILOTLESS, DECOY CRAFT SENT OUT BY CONDOR
THERE IT IS. BUT WHAT IS IT?
NEVER MIND WHAT IT IS. ORDER THE GREBS TO OPEN FIRE
WITH TERRIFIC FIRE-POWER CONCENTRATED UPON IT, THE DECOY CRAFT LASTED ONLY A FEW MINUTES
THERE HAD BEEN SUFFICIENT TIME, HOWEVER, FOR CAPT. CONDOR TO LAND UNSUSPECTED ON ANOTHER PART OF M.13!
CONDOR ALIGHTED IN A HANGAR AND SWIFTLY BEGAN TO GET INSIDE THE DUMMY MECHANICAL MAN WHICH HE HAD BROUGHT WITH HIM
AIR LOCK
SPACE TANKER
GOSH--WHAT A STROKE OF LUCK! THERE'S A FUEL SPACE TANKER OVER THERE. BUT I'LL HAVE TO FIND A CREW TO MAN IT
CONDOR WENT TO THE OUTER PLATFORM. A TROK-LEADER WAS RUSHING A PARTY OF MECHANICAL MEN TOWARDS THE CRASHED PATROL BOAT. UNRECOGNISED, CONDOR JOINED THEM
TROKS. THIS WAY. FOLLOW ME.
GEE--WHAT A SHOCK I'LL GIVE HIM!

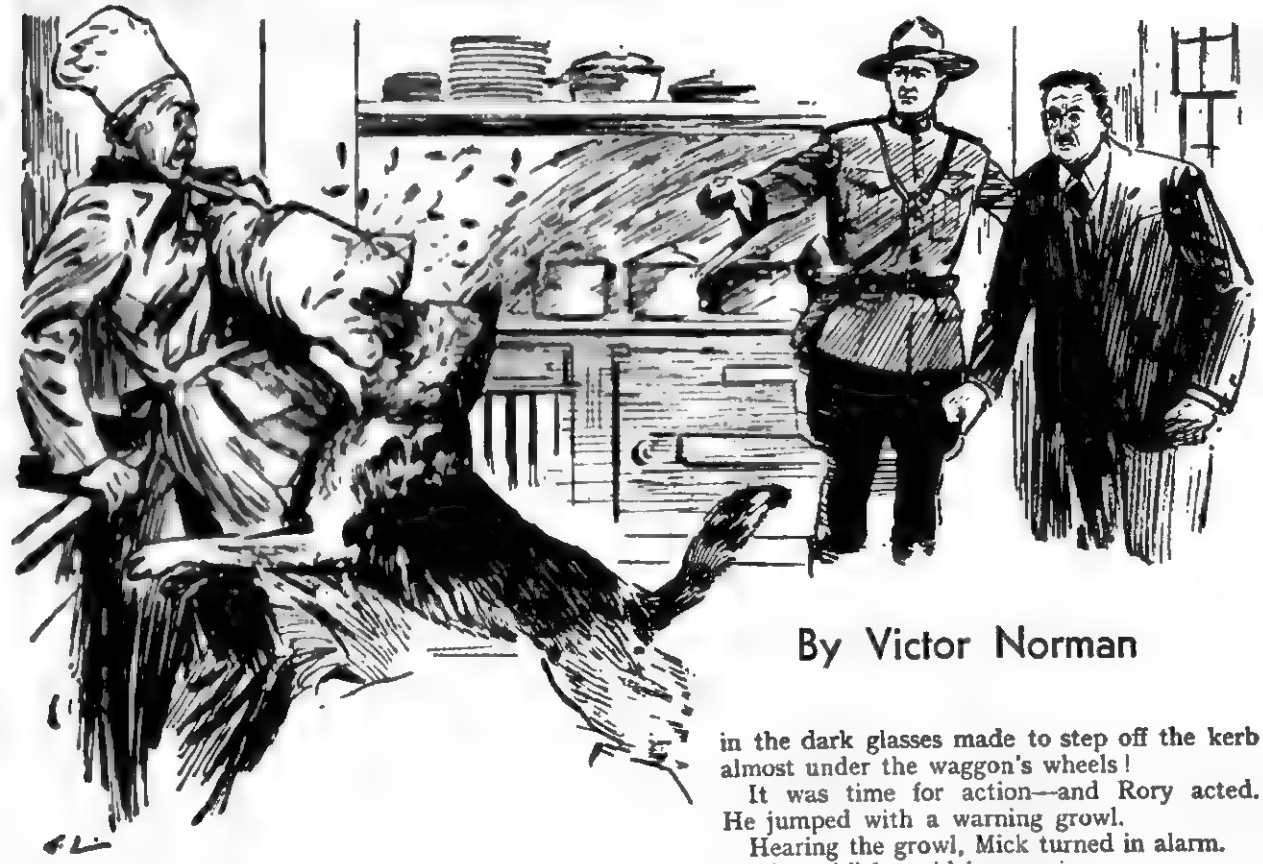
THE LEADER CALLED ON THE MECHANICAL MEN TO HALT. BUT, TO HIS AMAZEMENT, ONE OF THEM IGNORED HIS ORDER
TROKS! I SAID "HALT"! WHAT THE—
THE LEADER WAS ALMOST PETRIFIED WITH HORROR. FOR THE REBELLIOUS "TROK" ADVANCED UPON HIM MENACINGLY
HELP! SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG!
WITH ONE DEVASTATING PUNCH, CONDOR COMPLETELY K.O.'D THE LEADER. AT THE SAME TIME HE GRABBED THE MAN'S RADIO-VIBRATOR CONTROL ROD
CONDOR THEN SWUNG ROUND ON THE MECHANICAL MEN AND RAPPED OUT AN ORDER
TROKS! FOLLOW ME TO THE LAUNCHING BAY
BUT CONDOR'S PLAN TO SEIZE THE FUEL SPACE TANKER WAS ABOUT TO HAVE AN UNEXPECTED SET-BACK. FOR A PLATOON OF GREB MECHANICS HAD ENTERED THE LAUNCHING BAY, CONDOR AT ONCE ORDERED HIS MECHANICAL TROOPS TO ATTACK THEM
THE NEXT MOMENT, A TREMENDOUS BATTLE BETWEEN CONDOR'S TROKS AND THE GREBS WAS BEING WAGED. FILLED WITH TERROR, THE GREBS' PLATOON LEADER BOLTED
ATTACK! ATTACK! DON'T LET ANY OF THEM ESCAPE
THE PLATOON LEADER YELLED HIS NEWS TO THE CONTROL TOWER
HELP! HELP! THE TROKS ARE FIGHTING THE GREBS!
THE COMMANDER OF M.13 REFUSED TO BELIEVE THE FRANTIC REPORT
HELP! HELP!
IMPOSSIBLE! MECHANICAL MEN CAN'T REVOLT. THERE MUST BE A FAULT IN THE GENERATORS
THERE ISN'T, SIR. EVERYTHING IS WORKING PERFECTLY

MEANWHILE, HIS TROKS HAVING DESTROYED THE GREBS. CONDOR DARTED ACROSS TO THE TANKER. SWIFTLY HE SET THE CONTROLS SO THAT IT WOULD AUTOMATICALLY STEER FOR THE TRANSPORT. THEN HE LEAPT OUT
TROKS. YOU, YOU, AND YOU. TAKE THE TANKER OUT TO THE SPACE-SHIP. YOU, YOU. YOU-GUARD THE STAIRWAYS
FUEL
OBEYING CONDOR'S ORDERS, THE CREW OF MECHANICAL MEN SET OFF IN THE SPACE TANKER. THE COMMANDER OF M.13 COULD HARDLY BELIEVE HIS EYES!
LOOK! THEY HAVE STOLEN THE TANKER. IT ISN'T POSSIBLE-YET IT HAS HAPPENED!
CONDOR DARTED TO THE COCKPIT OF HIS PATROL BOAT AND RADIOED PETE
CONDOR CALLING SPACE-SHIP. TANKER ON ITS WAY. STAY OUT OF RANGE OF THE M.13 SPACE GUNS
CONDOR'S RADIO MESSAGE WAS PICKED UP BY THE M.13 RECEIVER AND HEARD BY THE COMMANDER
DID YOU HEAR THAT? IT EXPLAINS EVERYTHING. CONDOR IS IN CONTROL OF SOME OF THE TROKS. BUT HOW DID HE GET HERE? THE LAUNCHING BAY MUST BE RECAPTURED AT ONCE. SEND ANOTHER SQUAD OF GREBS INTO ACTION
SEEING THE GREBS COMING, CONDOR WAS READY FOR THEM WITH HIS OWN MECHANICAL MEN
TROKS. FIGHT TO THE LAST. DON'T LET THEM BREAK THROUGH
BACK ON THE SPACE-SHIP, PETE AND CO. THRILLED AS THEY SAW THE FUEL TANKER APPROACHING
HERE IT COMES! CONDOR'S GOT THROUGH
FUEL
WE'RE SAVED! HURRAH!

THE TWO SPACE-CRAFT GOT INTO POSITION IN READINESS TO FILL THE TRANSPORT'S REPAIRED FUEL TANKS
FUEL
SPACE TANKER
ON M.13 MORE GREBS HAD BEEN FLUNG INTO ACTION, AND CONDOR'S TROKS WERE NOW ON THE DEFENSIVE. DESPERATELY HE RADIOED PETE AGAIN
AREN'T THE TANKS FULL YET? WE CAN'T HOLD ON MUCH LONGER
ON THE TRANSPORT PETE WAS SHOUTING A TRIUMPHANT ORDER
FUEL TANKS
TANK'S FULL RELEASE THE FUEL TUBE
BY NOW, ON M.13, THE LAST TROK DEFENDER HAD FALLEN, AND THE GREBS HURLED THEMSELVES AT CONDOR
LISTEN CAREFULLY, PETE. I WANT YOU TO REVERSE THE TANKER'S CONTROLS, AND ADJUST THE DIRECTIONAL BEAM SO THAT THE VESSEL GOES DEAD STRAIGHT FOR THE CONTROL TOWER OF M 13

WITH ITS CREW OF MINDLESS MECHANICAL MEN, THE TANKER CAME SPEEDING BACK TO M.13
THE CONTROL TOWER WAS STRAIGHT AHEAD. BUT THIS MEANT NOTHING TO THE TROKS ON BOARD
CONDOR, HOWEVER, SEEMED DOOMED BY THE OVERWHELMING NUMBER OF GREBS
AT THAT INSTANT THE SPACE TANKER CRASHED THROUGH THE DOME OF M.13 – TO SHATTER THE CONTROL TOWER IN A BLINDING EXPLOSION
ALL POWER WAS AT ONCE CUT OFF FROM THE GREBS – – AND EVERY ONE OF THEM SANK DOWN AS IF DEAD
PHEW! THAT WAS HOT WHILE IT LASTED. NOW TO GET BACK TO MY PATROL BOAT AND RETURN TO PETE AND THE REST
PINNED DOWN BY THE DEBRIS IN THE CONTROL ROOM, THE DICTATOR'S MEN COULD DO NOTHING TO STOP CAPT. CONDOR ESCAPING
LOOK! CONDOR'S GETTING AWAY IN A TINY SPACE-SHIP!
THE OUTLAW HAS BEATEN THE LOT OF US!
CONDOR'S PATROL BOAT CARRIED HIM SAFELY BACK TO THE SPACE-TRANSPORT, AND THE MIGHTY VESSEL CONTINUED ON ITS JOURNEY TO ZOR AND FREEDOM THE CAPTAIN HAD GAINED ANOTHER VICTORY
BRAVO, CAPTAIN! YOU'VE SAVED US ALL FROM EXILE
DOWN WITH THE DICTATOR! WE'LL HELP YOU TO FIGHT HIM UNTIL HIS POWER IS SMASHED!
THAT'LL BE THE DAY, BOYS!

RORY—*Mick the Mountie's Dog*



By Victor Norman

TRICKING MOUNTIE MICK

RORY, dog assistant to Corporal Mick Mackenzie of the Mounties, walked at his master's heels along the main street of the North Canadian backwoods town. They were off duty, on foot, for Mick had some shopping to do, and of course where Mick went, Rory had to go.

Behind them came a tapping sound, and Rory looked round.

A stooping man came along the pavement, tapping it with his stick. He wore dark glasses, and had his hat turned down.

Rory, alert, saw him move to the edge of the kerb, and saw that the man's movements were unsteady and nervous. Something was wrong. He was ill perhaps. Mick had been ill once after 'flu, and Rory had had to keep a close, and watchful eye on him when he was weak from the after-effects.

This man seemed to be in bad shape, and Rory, trained to notice men, looked up at Mick to give him a nudge. But Mick had met a friend and was talking to him.

Down the road came a heavy waggon, and the man in the dark glasses made to step off the kerb almost under the waggon's wheels!

It was time for action—and Rory acted. He jumped with a warning growl.

Hearing the growl, Mick turned in alarm.

"Hey, Rory!" he said in surprise.

But Rory was not, as Mick thought at first glance, about to leap at the man and attack him. Rory was heading the man back safely to the kerb.

And just in time, it seemed. Had he been a moment later, the man might have been under the waggon.

"Whoa, mister," said Mick sharply, taking the man's arm. "Take it easy. I'll see you over the road." And added under his breath, "Gosh, the poor chap's blind."

The man drew back from Rory and tapped him gently with the stick, and although Rory did not as a rule like being touched with sticks, he knew that this was all right.

"Thank you, mister," came the man's reply. "'Fraid I've lost my four-footed eyes."

"Four-footed eyes? Ah, your dog!" said Mick sympathetically. "Well, that's tough for a man in your state. But you'll be all right at the moment. My dog there, Rory, saved you. He's trained, police trained, in fact like me, a Mountie. You can rely on him. Hook your stick in his collar and he'll be your guide—eh, Rory?"

Could Rory Outsmart the Backwoods' Most Ruthless Bank-Robber?

Mick took the crook of the man's stick, fixed it through Rory's collar. Then he ordered Rory across the road.

Rory looked right and left. He knew when the road was safe for crossing and he took his responsibility seriously. Over the road they went to the far side.

"Live far away?" Mick asked the man. "Mebbe I could take you there in a few minutes' time. I've got an urgent appointment at the moment."

"I have to go down the road, first left, first right . . . and then over the next road. But don't you bother," said the man with a heavy sigh, "I daresay I'll manage."

Mick did not mean to let the blind man go on alone. He had an appointment that would not wait; but Rory was free.

"If you'd like to borrow Rory," Mick said, "he'll be only too glad to help."

Rory looked up, and seemed to understand. He had had many strange jobs to do—guarding prisoners, crooks of all kind, even escorting children.

"That's mighty kind of you, Sergeant," said the man, gratefully.

"Corporal—Corporal Mackenzie, of the Mounties," corrected Mick gently.

"Thank you. I am Fred Kershaw, afflicted as you can judge, with more than poor eyesight, and not too good hearing. I shall be most grateful for the loan of your dog for say half an hour. Can he find his own way back?"

"From the North Pole if necessary," smiled Mick with no hint of boasting.

He patted Rory's head, and then said, "Good man. Guard!"

"Bad man. Guard" would have meant something else; for Rory had been trained to recognise the difference between the two.

Rory, with the stick in his collar, went with the man.

"Go on, dog—straight on," said the man.

Rory looked back at Mick; but as this was a job, he only looked back the once and gave a kind of "I'll be seeing you" look. Then he steered his charge along the street.

It was easy work, and Rory turned right or left as told, making sure that the way was safe, and sometimes brushing aside careless walkers.

He was well known in this town where he and Mick came often, although Rory's fame had spread far and wide, and crooks feared him.

The ordinary, honest citizens, of course, liked him, and the more crooks he raked in, the higher Rory's stock rose. Though there were some who sneered, and jeered and scoffed, and said it was all luck.

Rory led Fred Kershaw to where he wanted to go—a house in the centre of the town where rooms were let. The man groped for the door, unlatched it. Rory went in with him, then through another into the right-hand room. The man closed the door.

Rory sat down. What now? Still guard? He settled down and watched the man, wondering.

"Well, you're a mighty smart dog," said Kershaw with a short laugh.

That laugh made Rory stiffen. He knew that kind of laugh—almost a jeer. It was the way crooks laughed at him. So he gave the man a keener searching look and, even though Mick had said the man was good, Rory became watchful. He hadn't liked the short laugh.

"Hang on a minute, dog," said the man.

He walked to a cupboard, opened the door, looked inside, brought out a biscuit and tossed it to Rory. Then he went to an armchair, sat down, yawned, picked up a newspaper, and began to read it.

Rory had his limits, and he didn't know that keen eyesight was needed to read the paper. If Mick had been there, he would have instantly been suspicious. But Rory was a dog. He wasn't to realise that the man was putting on an act—and could see as well as Rory or Mick.

The man suddenly picked up a pencil and scribbled a message on a pad.

"This is for you to take your master, Rory," Kershaw said, and gave the same short jeering laugh. "I'll read it to you as you're so clever."

"Kershaw the Blind Man," he read, "asked me to write this note, Corporal, and thank you for your dog's help. He would like to ask you a favour. Could he borrow Rory for just an hour this afternoon?"

Rory, ears back, sat with head on side. He did not touch the biscuit, for he was worried. He no longer trusted this man. What cunning scheme had Kershaw in mind?

RORY—BANK ROBBER!

THE "blind man" bent over Rory, rolled the note, and fitted it round his collar. Because Mick had sent messages in that way, it made some kind of sense to Rory, and he did not resist. But as soon as it was on the collar, he went to the door and scratched, gave a short bark, and looked up at the man. He wanted to go.

"At your service," said Kershaw, opening the door.

Rory trotted off. He went straight to the office where Mick was having a talk with an old friend. Rory was worried. He knew Mick trusted the man; but now he was suspicious.

But how could Rory warn Mick that the man wasn't a "Good Man" after all? Rory waited outside the office door. But he started up as he heard the scrape of a chair. He knew the sounds. They meant that soon Mick would open the door.

A few seconds later his Mountie pal strode from the office.

"Why, Rory. Good chap. All well?" asked Mick.

Rory drooped his head, and drooped his tail, too.

"What? Something wrong?" said Mick surprised.

" Hullo, what's this? A message," he added, as Rory deliberately turned so that Mick looked at his collar.

Mick took the message and unfolded it.

" H'm," he mused. " Seems the blind man likes you, Rory. He wants you again this afternoon."

Mick stroked his chin. He had meant to go back to the Mountie Post, with Rory, but he felt he couldn't let down a blind man. For a moment, he weighed it up before deciding.

" O.K. We'll fix it, Rory. Now, let's go and get a bit to eat," he said.

It was then that Mick realised he didn't know Kershaw's address; although of course, Rory knew it. But how could he tell Rory to go back to the blind man? It was a question Mick soon answered. After they had dinner, he wrote a note and wound it round Rory's collar.

" Go back," he said, taking Rory to where they had parted that morning.

Rory hesitated, but he knew what was meant. The trouble was—how to warn Mick that the man wasn't really a friend?

Rory stood still, and looked at Mick. He barked, and then he sat up, as if to say " Please! Must I? "

Mick smiled and fondled his head.

" Why, Rory, old pal," he said, reproachfully. " Don't tell me you won't help a poor blind man? Want to come with me, eh? Have a romp in the Park? "

Rory's ears went up and he gave an excited yelp. The park! He knew that word well. But that sign of joy was misunderstood, for Mick supposed that Rory preferred to play ball in the park rather than lead the blind man. Duty came first, however, and Mick shook his head sadly.

" Trot on, Rory. Good dog. Go back! "

He turned away, but Rory stood still, tail down. Three yards further on, Mick hesitated and then pointed sternly in the direction Rory had to take. It was an order, and Rory with a sigh, turned and trotted on.

Rory did not look back again. He was worried, but he had been given a real order, so he obeyed. Dutifully, he reached the house, stood against the door and barked.

A fat man opened it and glared.

" Well, and what do you want? " he snapped.

There came a voice from somewhere behind him. " If that's a dog, it's for me! "

The fat man walked back into the house and Rory followed. The door of the phoney blind man's room was open and Rory went inside.

Kershaw sat in an armchair wearing dark glasses, quite still, but he turned as Rory entered, thanked the fat man who then left. Rory went to Kershaw and made the message on his collar obvious.

" I see. You've got to be back at four o'clock," said the " blind " man when he had read it. " Suits me. I shall just make it. We start in ten minutes' time, Rory, you clever dog." And he gave his short jeering laugh.

Orders are orders, however, and Rory allowed a heavy chain to be attached to his collar before they left the house together. Kershaw used his stick to tap the pavement.

Rory went as directed, and presently they turned into the main street, crossed the road when Rory knew it was clear, and then halted outside a large building.

" In you go," said Kershaw.

Rory led him into the building. It was a bank. One other man was coming out, but otherwise they were alone, and the man with the dark glasses tapped his way to the counter with Rory leading.

" Isn't that the Mountie's dog? " asked the teller behind the counter.

" Yes. He lent him to me for the afternoon. I'm blind, you know. Ah, what a wonderful friend, a clever dog."

Another teller came along and put an enormous wad of dollars on the counter.

Taking off his dark glasses, the " blind man " for whom Rory was acting as guide dog began to read a newspaper. Rory little realised that the man had shown himself to be an impostor.

" If that feller could see," he grinned to the teller serving Kershaw, " it would do him a treat to get an eyeful of all this cash."

The two men little realised that the blind man was a fake—and at that instant was greedily eyeing the notes.

The chain jingled as Kershaw tied Rory to the counter.

Then the fake blind man groped along beyond the reach of the chain.

" This way," guided the teller, and then shrugged as he saw it had no effect on Kershaw. " O.K. Stay there."

It was near where the large wad of notes was stacked that Kershaw groped.

" I want to cash a cheque," he said.

In the most natural way he groped for a pen on the counter. The good natured teller obligingly lifted the grille to help him. It was as the grille went up that Kershaw's manner changed.

His right hand whipped into his coat pocket and pulled out a gun! He knocked his dark glasses off with his other hand!

" O.K. This is a stick up. So get your hands up—or else," he rapped to the astounded teller.

He grabbed the pile of notes, and stuffed them into a bag that was slung inside his coat.

" He's not blind! " choked the other teller, who also raised his arms.

Rory sprang as he saw the gun. He knew now that Kershaw was a bad man, knew by the teller's alarmed yell; knew by the evil look of the man with the gun.

But Rory's spring came to nothing. Being fixed by the chain, he swung over and landed on the floor with a crash.

While the tellers stood with hands up, the gunman backed to the door. A yard from it, he paused, hurled his hat away and jammed on a fur cap. Inside the fur cap, was fitted a white wig. Swiftly he jammed a white moustache above his lip, and unfurled a cape slung over his back, then wrapped it round him.

He was in a completely fresh disguise.

Suddenly he stepped out of the bank, and slammed the door!

Tethered at the rail outside was a roan mare. To unhitch the horse and spring into the saddle was the work of a moment. So that before anyone in the street had grasped that anything unusual had happened, the bank robber was in the saddle and away!

Rory's barking filled the air. The tellers sprang to the door but even as they rushed out, Mick the Mountie came charging down the street, having heard Rory.

" What's wrong with Rory? " he yelled, grabbing a white-faced teller.

The man gave him a bitter, savage look.

" Plenty," he snapped. " He's just led a gunman, pretending to be blind, right into the bank, and the thief has got away with two thousand dollars."

Mick charged into the bank where the manager, who had rushed in from his office, was shouting in fury.

" So you let a gunman fool you he was blind! " he howled in rage.

" Well, he'd got a dog leading him— " protested a teller.

" So what? "

" It was the Mountie's dog! How could we guess it was aiding a crook? "

Meanwhile, heedless of the uproar, Mick unchained Rory, who strained to get at the door. But the manager barred his way.

" Not so fast. You stay here! " ordered the manager.

" We've got to get after that crook," snapped Mick.

" First you'll have to answer a few questions," retorted the manager. " It was that stupid dog of yours led the man in here. And what I want to know, and what your officer will want to know, is how you came to be mixed up with that bank robber. It doesn't look so good for you, Mountie! "

Mick, white-faced, looked down at Rory, who was straining desperately at the lead. " Hold, Rory! " said Mick quietly. " We're in a jam, pal."

Mick would have to explain how it had happened that he had lent his well-known dog to a gunman!

There was no denying that Rory had helped the bank robber. Accompanied by a Mountie's dog, the man had been safe from suspicion.

" Listen," said Mick fiercely. " Any questions I have to answer can be answered later. We're going to get that man . . . Now! "

Rory was straining so hard that Mick let him go—and to his surprise, Rory went not to the doors, but to a corner behind them where the gunman had flung his hat.

With a snarl of triumph Rory took it and then shook it. But that done, he rushed it to Mick. He knew Mick liked to have things like it soon after a crime.

" A clue! " said Mick, seizing it. " The gunman's hat."

" Idiot! " scoffed the manager, snatching it. " Look inside. No name! No maker's name even. There's a score of hats just like this in town."

Mick took it back.

" Wrong! There's only one like it. It may mean nothing to you without some kind of writing, but this hat has got a smell. And with this to guide him, I bet Rory can hunt this rascal down, wherever he is."

Mick rushed to the door, and released Rory from the chain.

" Find him, pal," whooped Mick.

Instantly Rory raced off down the street in the direction the bank robber had taken. The Mountie dog was determined to track down the man who had so cunningly brought trouble to him and his master!

THE DARING DISGUISE

MICK was feeling down in the dumps. For barely half an hour after setting out on the track of the bank robber, Rory had returned

to the township. It seemed that Mick's faithful dog pal had lost the trail.

There was a hue and cry throughout the territory for a white-haired man wearing a black fur cap and a cape. But everyone knew it was only a disguise which the bank robber had probably shed before he'd travelled far.

At the Post, where he had returned, Mick was on the carpet before the Inspector. Inspector Bennet paced up and down, muttering in annoyance.

"A fine mess! I thought you had more sense, Corporal. Fancy being fooled in by a phoney blind man. Huh!"

Mick gritted his teeth. Easy to say that now.

"And as for Rory—" said Inspector Bennet bitterly. "He's supposed to scent a Bad Man fifty yards away."

"It was my fault," said Mick loyally. "Rory did try to warn me. I can see it now. He didn't want to go with the man. I thought that was because he wanted his regular game in the park. But it wasn't that. No. Poor Rory knew the man was a wrong 'un, but couldn't tell me."

"A heck of a lot of good his knowing if he can't tell. Oh, I'll admit Rory's done some fine things," said Inspector Bennet, "but what'll they say at Headquarters? And what'll the newspapers say? We'll be a laughing stock, Corporal!"

"Anyway, we've got that clue," pointed out Mick.

"Clue! Has it helped Rory find the man? Where is Rory, by the way?" he ended, looking around.

"Still trying to pick up the bank robber's trail," said Mick grimly.

"Time he was back to eat."

"He won't eat until he gets his man."

Mick had hardly said that when a boy came in, grinning.

"Inspector Bennet?" he asked.

"Yes—what is up, son?" asked the Inspector, wheeling.

"Mr. Solomons of the Diamond Saloon sent me along. Wants you to call off your dog. He says it'll rob the till, or call in some crooks to do it."

The Inspector gritted his teeth.

"Listen, son. If you value your skin, don't bring me gags like that! And I'll have a word with Mr. Solomons about it myself—"

"Yeah, but take it easy, Inspector," said the grinning boy, backing out of the office. "All joking aside, that dog's hanging about the kitchen and driving the cook there barmy. Seems the dog's hungry."

Mick jumped up.

"On the level? Rory is there?"

"Certainly is. I reckon he'll pay for food when he gets his slice of the two thousand bucks from the bank robber."

The boy darted out, and Mick unclenched his hands and gave a short laugh.

"I'll go and get him," he said. Then he drew up. "Could it be that the bank robber's there?"

"What—in this town? That's likely!" scoffed Inspector Bennet.

Mick did not argue. He hurried out, and swung astride his horse, Flash. Then he cantered off to the town.

There was a grinning crowd outside the Diamond Saloon. Mick dismounted and pushed his way through.

"This is a stick-up. So get your hands up—or else," the phoney blind man rapped to the astonished bank-tellers. Frantically Rory strained to tackle the bank-robber, but the chain attached to the counter held him back!

"Here's the Mountie!" came a shout.

"It's another hold-up, boys!"

Mick entered the saloon and met Mr. Solomons, the owner.

"Huh! Come for your dog, eh? Well, he's locked in my room," snapped Solomons. "He got in through the kitchen window, and only the cook's knife drove him out. I tell you, if that dog steals any food—"

"He won't," said Mick curtly. "Where's the kitchen?"

"The dog's in my office. Get him! Never mind the kitchen."

"I'll see the kitchen," inserted Mick. "Come on! This is a police visit. We're hunting a bank robber. The kitchen and fast."

Solomons scowled, but led the way.

"You're as dumb as the dog if you think that bank robber could hide here," he jeered.

He led the way to the kitchen where the cook, a portly man in white, stood before a stove.

"It's the Mountie, come about his dog," announced Solomons.

"Well, tell him to take his dog away. He's stolen a chunk of steak," snorted the cook. "I warn you, Mountie, he'll have my knife chucked at him if he shows up again."

Mick did not answer. He looked about him in the kitchen. There were cupboards, and despite Solomon's protests, he looked in them all.

"You'll get a bad report to the Inspector for this," said Solomons in fury. "How could that bank robber come and hide here? It's against reason he should even try too."

Mick looked over the floor of the kitchen, but did not answer. He knew Rory—his dog wouldn't leave duty to hunt steaks. He must have tracked the bank robber down to somewhere around the saloon.

"If you set Rory free, I'll whistle him," said Mick.

"Set the dog free," shouted the cook, waving a carving knife, "and he'll have a taste o' this."

"That's enough of that," rapped Mick, taking out his six-shooter from the holster. "Now, set him free, or—"

Solomons, muttering, went off to his office, and Mick whistled. At the third whistle, Rory bounded into the kitchen.

He rushed at Mick with wild joy, and then turned, snarling, to the cook.

"All right, pal. He won't use it," said Mick, calming Rory. "But there's a cellar here, and we're going to search it."

Back came Solomons, and the cook told him what Mick had said.

"Oh, no, you don't search my cellar," declared Solomons in growing fury. "I tell you it's locked, and no one could have got in there. No one. Have you seen anyone hanging around?" he asked the red-faced, portly cook.

"Not a soul. And I've been working here for a week. This is my kitchen and no one's allowed in it—not even the smartest dog in Canada."

Mick wheeled on him.

"Just a minute. Let me see that knife," he ordered sharply. "And, Rory—you sit down."

Rory sat, and the cook, with a mocking look at Solomons and a grimace at Mick, handed over the knife. That was all Mick wanted—to make sure the cook didn't use it.

Mick, holding the knife, did not look at Rory, but he spoke to him.

"Seek him, Rory!" he snapped.

Rory leapt at the cook. He grabbed the man's apron and ripped it. Then, while the man fell back, seized his shirt and ripped it wide open. A large cushion was revealed—which Rory's snapping jaws split. Feathers flew in all directions!

"Hey!" said Solomons in blank astonishment.

The cook wasn't fat at all—but thin, and padded with cushions!

"All right, the game's up," Mick snapped to the cook. "I've got you covered—and Rory's watching you, too. You were smart, but not smart enough to beat him."

The cook put his hands up as Mick's six-shooter covered him; but his eyes were on Rory, who was showing him sharp teeth.

Solomons mopped his white face and stared in bewilderment.

"I don't get it," he panted. "You don't mean that my cook is the gunman—the fake blind man?"

Mick chuckled. He could afford to now.

"Why, surely," he said. "He's only been with you a week? I suppose he had to-day off until now?"

"Yeah, that's right. He came back to work about an hour ago."

Mick explained.

"I suspected him when I saw how Rory scared him. And when Rory snarled at him I realised he must be the bank robber in yet another disguise. First he posed as a blind man to rob the bank, then as a white-haired trapper—and doubled back here to carry on being your cook."

The cook suddenly lowered his arms and swung a chair in front of Rory, dodging sideways. Mick, reluctant to shoot unless necessary, held his fire.

Quick as a flash, the cook seized a red-hot iron from the stove and threw it at Rory. But Rory, quick as light, dodged, jumped at the bank robber and bowled him over on to his back.

"Guard him, Rory," said Mick.

Rory placed one foot on the fallen man's chest and growled into his face.

Mick walked across, handcuffed the man, and then turned to Rory again.

"Seek, Rory," he ordered.

Rory hunted around. He knew what he had to seek. He had done the job before. When he had rounded up a criminal, he next had to round up what he had stolen. This would be something with a mixed smell—the smell of this man and of the bank.

It took him three minutes. In an old coat, hanging on the door, was the money. He tugged down the coat by breaking its collar loop, and then ripped the lining, to reveal wads of dollar notes.

"Well," said Solomons, his jaw dropping. "That's certainly some dog, Mountie. I lost my watch the other day. Reckon he could find it?"

"If you make an official report, yes," said Mick with a grin. "Rory's a police dog. Duty only. And the next time a blind man wants his help, I'll make sure the man isn't a fake. Now we'll be getting this crook along to the Post, and a nice cell."

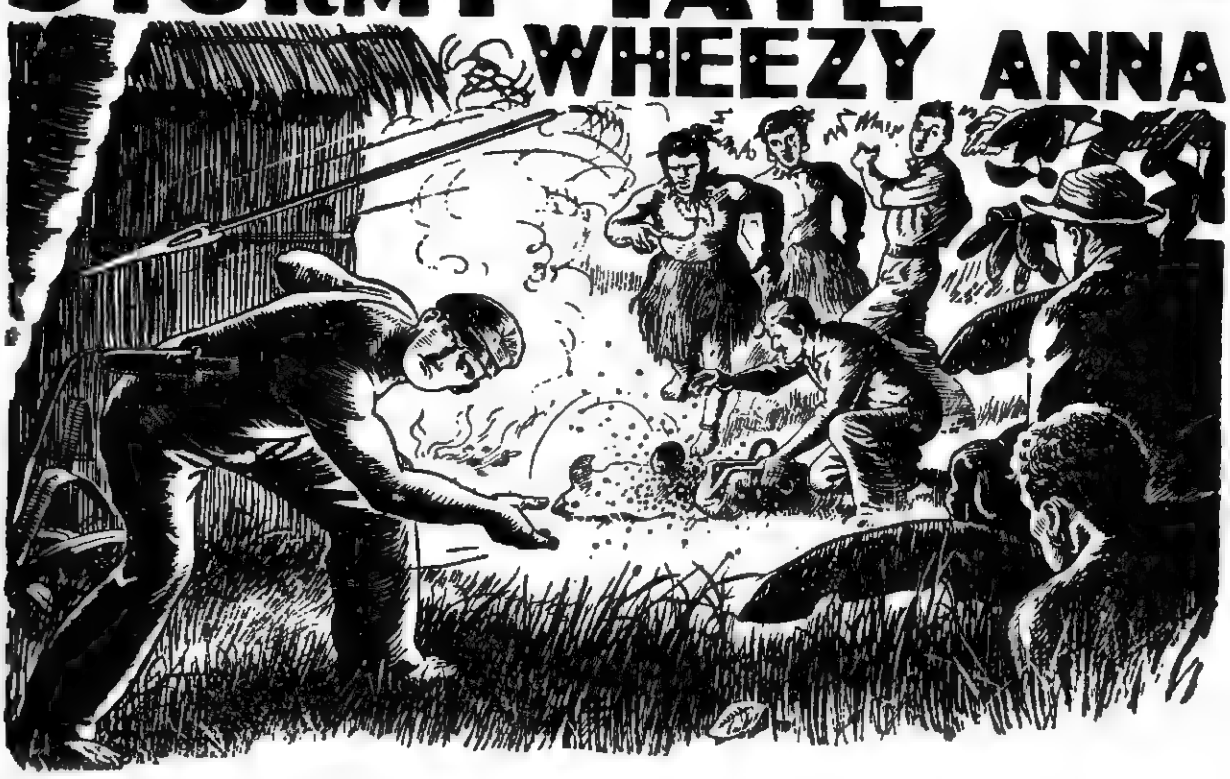
Mick turned to his clever dog pal.

"I suppose you're just about ready for your dinner?" he chuckled. "Well, after this day's work, you certainly deserve it."

Rory barked happily, and nudged the bank robber towards the doorway.

The Mountie dog had got his man!

STORMY TATE OF THE WHEEZY ANNA



By R. G. Thomas

HIS SHIP STOLEN!

"THERE'S something queer about this island, Tiny. We thought it was uninhabited—but I'm beginning to have my doubts."

Stormy Tate, skipper of the Wheezy Anna—one of the best-known, and oldest, trading steamers in the South Seas—stood looking across a small clearing. He was clad in singlet and sailcloth trousers, with a battered naval cap perched jauntily over one eye.

Tiny White, the Wheezy Anna's fat and good-humoured cook, looked at Stormy in surprise.

"What makes you think someone lives here, Stormy?" he demanded.

Stormy pointed to a small heap of blackened stones which formed a crude fireplace. Then he pointed to a hollow beneath a bush which held a large number of empty tins. Their paper wrappers looked almost brand-new.

"If you ask me," Stormy said, "some of those tins were opened no later than this morning."

Tiny took a quick look about him.

"Perhaps Bill King camped here during the night?" he suggested.

Stormy shook his head.

"Bill King only landed yesterday morning," he stated. "From the look of those blackened stones, this place has been used as a camp for several days—and by more than one man, judging by the great number of opened tins."

The two pals had good reason to be surprised. Luka Island had the reputation of being uninhabited. The Wheezy Anna had only called there in order to land a passenger named Bill King. He had told Stormy he wanted to spend two or three days on the island in order to discover whether the soil would be suitable for coconut plantations.

He had landed the day before, and on the following morning Stormy and Tiny had set out to explore the island themselves, leaving Jock McKay, the Scottish engineer, in charge of the Wheezy Anna. They had rowed half-way round the island in the ship's boat before landing.

Stormy looked at the heap of empty tins, and then spun upon his heels.

"We'd better get back to the Wheezy Anna," he began. "I—"

Crack! Crack!

The sound of two distant but unmistakable revolver shots caused Stormy to break off.

"I don't like the sound of those shots," he rapped. "They came from somewhere near the Wheezy Anna."

"Which way do we go?" Tiny demanded. "Cut straight across the island, or get back to the boat?"

"Back to the boat," Stormy ordered, starting to run. "It might take us hours to cross the island."

Stealing Stormy's Steamer Was Just Asking For Trouble—And It Came!

He led the way back to where they had left the ship's boat. They listened intently for sounds of further firing, but there were none.

As they raced along they disturbed a colony of monkeys, which swung among the trees and chattered in anger.

At last they reached the boat. Each took an oar, and began to row furiously. The same questions troubled them.

What had happened aboard the Wheezy Anna? Who had fired the shots? And had the firing anything to do with the unknown men who had been living on the island?

Soon a familiar headland came in sight. The Wheezy Anna had been anchored in the bay beyond it.

Suddenly Tiny turned his head. He gave a gasp of amazement and ceased to row!

"Look!" Tiny gasped.

Stormy looked, and hardly believed his eyes. Far beyond the headland he saw a long line of black smoke—smoke from the Wheezy Anna's funnel!

So the tramp-steamer had put to sea, and at full steam, too!

Stormy's eyes glinted.

"I understand those shots now," he gritted. "The men who've been living on the island must have boarded the Wheezy Anna and captured her."

An expression of alarm crossed Tiny's face.

"Jock wouldn't give in without a fight," he gasped. "Do you think that—"

He found himself unable to put the question into words. He feared that Jock McKay might have been killed.

"The crew wouldn't give in without a fight, either," Stormy said. "All we can do for the moment is to pull into the bay—but somehow I mean to get even with those thugs aboard the Wheezy Anna."

They went round the headland, and rowed across the bay, but they only saw a deserted beach ahead of them. By the time they had beached the boat the Wheezy Anna was on the horizon.

"Listen," Stormy suddenly burst out.

He was sure he'd heard a shout from among the trees. Next moment he was running into the jungle, with Tiny striving to keep up with him.

They came to a clearing—to see an amazing and cheering sight!

Jock McKay and the native members of the Wheezy Anna's crew were lying trussed like chickens. Around Jock's forehead was a blood-stained bandage.

Jock explained as Stormy cut him free.

"I was down in the engine room," he said, "when I suddenly heard running footsteps on deck. I came up to see what was happening and I found myself facing Bill King and three other white men. All of them were armed and I was told to put up my hands. King fired when I jumped at him and one of his bullets grazed my forehead."

He shrugged.

"The shot knocked me out," he went on. "And when I came to I was tied up here."

The native crew had been helpless to resist the attackers, and had been brought along with Jock.

"For once in my life," Stormy said bitterly, "I've been played for a sucker. Bill King knew there were three men already on Luka Island. He booked a passage with me, all the time planning to take possession of the Wheezy Anna once I'd gone ashore here."

"But what's behind it all?" Tiny wanted to know.

Stormy looked at Jock.

"Did you learn anything?" he demanded. "Did Bill King say anything when he dumped you in this clearing?"

Jock shrugged.

"One of the men started to say something about Fowler Island," he said, "but Bill King quickly shut him up."

"Fowler Island!" Tiny echoed in stark surprise. "Surely Bill King can't be headed there? It's death for white men to land on that island."

He looked towards the horizon. All that could be seen there now was a tiny smudge of black smoke.

"Not that the outlook for us isn't black," he shrugged.

"We may be marooned here for years. And I doubt if we'll ever set eyes on the Wheezy Anna again!"

NATIVES ON THE WAR-PATH

QUICKLY Stormy turned upon him.

"Nonsense, Tiny," he rapped. "To start with, we're not marooned here. The ship's lifeboat is still in our possession. We'll all be back on board the Wheezy Anna before the week is out, I promise you."

His two pals stared at him in astonishment. How could he possibly speak so confidently?

"King's business at Fowler Island will keep him there for a few days, I should think," Stormy announced.

"Time enough for us to catch up with him."

Tiny and Jock began to feel in better spirits.

"There's another thing, too," Stormy went on. "The Wheezy Anna is a well-known ship, and if King takes her into any port he's bound to be questioned. It's a million to one that he's planning to use her to carry some sort of cargo—and that while he's off Fowler Island he'll attempt to disguise her in some way."

"Then what are we waiting for?" Tiny whooped. "Let's get going."

"Right," chuckled Stormy. "First stop—Fowler Island!"

Within minutes they were all aboard the lifeboat. The mast was placed in position and the sail taken out of its locker. When it was hoisted in the strong wind, the boat began to surge through the clear, green water.

Stormy knew he would have no difficulty about food or water, as the boat was well provisioned. There was also a reliable compass on board.

Stormy's only fear was that they might either run into a violent storm or else a dead calm.

But for two days and nights the weather remained good, and the lifeboat progressed steadily on its course.

On the third day Stormy made sure of his compass bearing and also took a reading of the sun.

"If my calculations are correct," he announced, "we should reach Fowler Island somewhere about midnight. That'll suit me fine. With luck we'll all be on the island before dawn, and King and Co. won't know a thing about it."

The sun went down but there was no sign of the island. Nevertheless, Stormy kept confidently to the course he had worked out. It was nearly midnight when a floating tree branch brushed against the boat—a branch which still carried a few green leaves.

"We must be off the island now," observed Stormy.

Down came the mast and then the crew began using the oars in muffled rowlocks. Tiny was well up in the bows and suddenly he turned.

"Easy on the oars," he whispered. "Land ahead."

The boat drifted up to a beach, where heavy bushes overhung the water. Underneath these they hid the boat. When dawn came, Stormy and his crew were crouched amongst the trees.

As soon as it was light enough, Stormy climbed the nearest headland. He was able only to see half the island, and of the Wheezy Anna there was no sign. But there were many small bays on Fowler Island where she could have dropped anchor.

"We'll have to start walking round the edge of the island," Stormy said, on his return, to the crew. "And try not to show yourselves. I don't want any trouble with the islanders."

They set out in single file, with Stormy leading the way. The hours went by but still they failed to sight the ship. Neither did they see any sign of the island's inhabitants.

Noon came and went and still they continued their search. As the sun began to dip towards the horizon, Stormy knew that they must have walked round at least three-quarters of the island's edge. He began to feel anxious.

Perhaps the reference to Fowler Island which Jock had overheard had had no particular meaning. Perhaps the Wheezy Anna had not come to the island at all.

It was an hour to darkness when Stormy led the way up a long slope. He reached the top—and fell flat.

He had found the Wheezy Anna!

Tiny and the others came crawling up to him, to see the Wheezy Anna riding at anchor in the small bay.

"Gosh!" Tiny gasped. "Look at the beach!"

The beach was one mass of natives. There were women and children there, but every warrior was armed to the teeth. Everyone there seemed to be greatly excited—whooping and waving their arms.

Stormy and his pals stared in amazement. For scores of canoes were taking native warriors to the Wheezy Anna. What could it mean?

"I dinna understand it," Jock frowned, shaking his head. "That's Bill King on the Wheezy Anna's deck. He doesn't appear to expect trouble from the natives."

Stormy made out a figure leaning over the rails of the Wheezy Anna's deck. Soon it was joined by three other figures.

"It's got me beat, too," Stormy confessed.

At that moment the natives on the beach began to get even more excited, and all the warriors crowded into a fleet of canoes. Out into the bay they shot, heading for the Wheezy Anna.

"They're going to attack," Tiny gasped. "Bill King and the others won't stand a chance."

Stormy shook his head.

"You've got it wrong, Tiny," he said. "They're not attacking—or Bill King wouldn't be taking things so easy."

Bill King and his three companions were still

leaning over the ship's rails, calmly watching the oncoming boatloads of native warriors.

The canoes massed about the ship and the armed warriors began scrambling aboard. Hundreds of them filled the little tramp-steamer's deck, as the almost empty canoes were paddled back to land.

"What a cargo. The Wheezy Anna's never seen the like before," gulped Jock McKay.

"I can't make head nor tail of what's happening." Stormy said slowly. "How is it that those natives are so friendly towards King—and yet they're armed to the teeth?"

Native women and children still lined the beach. It was evident that they intended to stay there until the ship sailed.

But what was the Wheezy Anna's destination?

Suddenly a wild chanting came from the crowded deck of the ship. It grew louder, and Stormy strained his ears to listen. He gasped in anger.

"At last I see the reason for all this."

He turned to Tiny and Jock.

"They're chanting death to the Carru tribe, who live on Carru Island. The Carrus have always been the enemies of the Fowler Islanders!"

"I get it," Tiny burst out. "The Fowler Islanders intend to invade Carru Island, and they're using our ship as transport."

Jock's jaw set grimly.

"It'll be a massacre. When the Wheezy Anna drops anchor off Carru Island all those howling savages will be hidden under hatches. The Carru Island folk won't realise that anything is wrong. The Fowler Islanders will probably land under cover of darkness and kill the Carru Islanders while they're asleep."

Stormy smacked a fist into the palm of his other hand.

"Not if I can help it," he vowed.

"Somehow I'm stopping the Wheezy Anna from leaving here."

Grim determination gleamed in his eyes.

"I don't know what Bill King expected to get out of this—but, whatever it is, his scheme must not succeed."

INTO ACTION—WITH COCONUTS

A SOLITARY canoe suddenly put out from the beach. It came alongside the Wheezy Anna, and Bill King and one of his white companions climbed into it. They were rowed to the beach, where they clambered out and strode confidently into the trees.

Stormy crawled back down the slope until it was safe for him to get to his feet.

"Now's our chance," he announced. "Bill King's on the island—and we've got to capture him. That will be the start of my plan to stop the Wheezy Anna from sailing to Carru Island!"

Stormy and his two pals, followed by the native crew, hurried into the jungle.

"I caught a glimpse of the village from the top of the slope," Stormy said to Tiny. "Bill King and his pal are making for it—and so are we."

He began to run, for the sun was already upon the horizon. Within a few minutes it would vanish, and tropical darkness would cover the island.

It was in the very last second of daylight that Stormy and his crew came in sight of the village. One small fire was burning in the centre and between them and the fire four figures were standing. They were Bill King and his companion, and two high-ranking Fowler Islanders.

Darkness closed in.

"We'll go along the back of the village," Stormy whispered. "I want to overhear their conversation if possible, and then capture all four without causing any alarm."

It wasn't an easy matter creeping along at the back of the village. Stout hanging vines hampered their passage and twice Stormy nearly stumbled into gullies.

They came to a hut almost opposite the four men. Stormy went forward alone. The darkness at the side of the hut hid him from view. He heard the voice of Bill King.

"Well, Chief," said the cunning schemer, "all your men are aboard my ship. I've a full head of steam and can sail at once. To-morrow afternoon we'll be anchored off Carru Island and after dark you'll be able to lead your warriors to the attack."

Angrily Stormy clenched his fists.

"Bill King's going to rue the day he stole the Wheezy Anna." he gritted.

Then Bill King was speaking again.

"But there is a bargain to be kept between us, Chief," he said oilily. "I want my payment here and now."

"You shall be paid," a guttural voice answered him.

One of the natives turned and he made his way into the hut, alongside which Stormy was standing. He came out carrying a small leather bag. As he did so, the other native stooped to spread out a square of cloth on the ground.

The first native, who was the Chief, pulled open the mouth of the leather bag.

"Your payment," he announced.

Then he carefully poured the contents of the leather bag on to the cloth. The light from the nearby fire reflected on the objects which streamed from the bag. Glittering, they showed themselves to be a fortune in pearls!

Greed lit up Bill King's eyes. As he stopped, to run his fingers through the precious pearls, Stormy Tate slid back into the darkness.

Taking his knife from its sheath, Stormy reached high to cut down a thick, hanging vine. Then he began collecting fallen coconuts from beneath a palm tree. His next move was to seek out Tiny, and give him whispered instructions.

Stormy moved forward again just as Bill King took the leather bag from the Chief. Bending down, the treacherous white man gathered up a handful of the pearls and poured them back into the bag.

As he did so a shrill chattering came from the trees. It seemed as though it came from a monkey—but the sounds were really being made by Stormy!

And then Stormy deliberately bowled one of the fallen coconuts. His aim was perfect. The coconut struck the heap of pearls, sending many of them rolling across the ground.

A furious curse escaped Bill King. Desperately he tried to prevent any pearls disappearing into the darkness beyond the fire. At the same time the Chief turned with a shout, and sent a spear winging into the darkness between the huts.

The spear passed within yards of Stormy, who now showed himself and hurled another coconut. Once more his aim was perfect. The coconut struck Bill King's hand, just as he'd taken up another handful of the pearls.

Every one of them spun into the darkness. He came bounding to his feet in furious anger as Stormy slipped back into the shadows.

He fired his gun into the trees. That was when Stormy and Tiny took a tremendous risk. Chancing being hit by stray bullets, they went into action.

Bill King, his two white companions, and the two natives were in a bunch. Stormy took a tight grip on the end of the cut vine—Tiny gripped the other end, fifteen yards away—and the two of them raced out into the clearing!

Bill King and his amazed accomplices saw the vine stretched out between Stormy and Tiny—but they failed to dodge it.

The "trip-wire" caught the five men just above their ankles, and pulled them flat on their faces!

Then Jock McKay and Stormy's native crew went to work. Quickly they knocked out King and Co. and tied them up.

But Stormy was anxious. Had Bill King raised the alarm by firing his gun. Would the warriors aboard the Wheezy Anna come flocking back before he was ready to deal with them?

"We've got to work quickly," he rapped. "It's mighty lucky that I know the Carru Islanders so well Now here's what you have to do—"

Quickly he gave Tiny and the others instructions. Afterwards he made them repeat strange words after him.

"And when you start to shout," Stormy said finally. "Shout as though you're on the warpath."

Stormy ran forward, the others after him. They kicked at the fire in order to scatter it and then each one picked up a burning brand. As quickly as they possibly could they set fire to every hut in the village!

"Now," Stormy commanded. "Shout."

Next moment his two pals and the crew were yelling their loudest. And it was the war-song of Carru Island that they shouted—the war-song of victory, which Stormy had just taught them!

As soon as the shouting started, Stormy ran for a tall tree and clambered high into its branches.

Aboard the Wheezy Anna the sound of firing had been heard. The natives crowded on the deck had looked towards the island but hadn't moved.

Suddenly a shout of alarm escaped one of them. He pointed to a red glow above the trees. As he did so the sound of wild chanting came over the water.

Instantly—

"That is the victory chant of the Carru Islanders!" yelled one warrior. "They have landed, and are burning our village."

"Death to our enemies of Carru Island!"

They didn't wait for canoes to take them ashore. They fought to get to the ship's rails; then in a solid mass they leapt into the waters of the bay.

Back on the island Stormy scrambled down from his tree-top perch.

"It's worked! They're returning!" he cried in triumph. "Get cracking with the prisoners."

They left the village by a roundabout way, for they knew the natives would use the most direct route. Reaching the beach, they found it absolutely deserted. Quickly Stormy and Co. commandeered a couple of canoes, flung their captives into them, and paddled for the Wheezy Anna.

Stormy was the first to clamber aboard and, for a moment, the two white men who had been left behind mistook him for Bill King.

"What's gone wrong, Bill?" one of them demanded. "Have the Carru Islanders really landed and—?"

A yell of alarm cut him short.

"Look out!" cried the other man. "It's not Bill King—it's Stormy Tate."

But already Stormy was launching himself at them, fists swinging, and by the time Tiny and Jock scrambled on board, he had K.O.'d the two schemers.

When the Fowler Islanders, realising they'd been tricked, came racing back to the beach, the Wheezy Anna was already steaming out of the bay. They could only shout and wave weapons in anger.

As the island faded into the darkness behind them, Tiny looked at Stormy.

"You're a marvel, Skipper," he said. "You've pulled us out of a nasty situation—and scuppered those schemers."

Stormy's weather-beaten face broke into a broad grin.

"The two Chiefs, and King and his gang will go to prison for a mighty long time for this work," he laughed. "And I don't think there'll ever be another attempt to massacre the folk on Carru Island! The Fowler Islanders have learnt their lesson!"

Tiny chuckled.

"And what a lesson you taught 'em, Stormy. They won't want to tangle with you again!"

SANDY DEAN'S FLYING SURPRISE-PACKET

By BARRY NELSON

WHEN A MODEL-MAKING COMPETITION WAS ANNOUNCED AT TOLLGATE SCHOOL, ONE OF THE FIRST BOYS TO ENTER IT WAS SANDY DEAN. FOR THE PRIZE TO BE AWARDED TO THE WINNING COMPETITOR WAS A MAGNIFICENT SPORTS BICYCLE; AND THAT WAS JUST WHAT SANDY NEEDED. HIS OLD BIKE HAVING ALMOST FALLEN TO PIECES. BUT BOSSY BATES, THE FOURTH-FORM BULLY, WAS EQUALLY DETERMINED TO WIN THE COMPETITION

ON THE DAY BEFORE THE CONTEST, SANDY DEAN AND HIS PALS, JACK HARDY AND OWL WATSON, WERE BUSY IN THEIR STUDY

THE MODEL'S COMING ALONG NICELY NOW, CHAPS. WHAT WE'VE TO GUARD AGAINST IS BOSSY BATES GETTING AT IT AND SMASHING IT

QUIET, SANDY--I RECKON THERE'S SOMEONE LISTENING OUTSIDE THE DOOR

TOLLGATE

BY THE TIME OWL HAD WHIPPED OPEN THE DOOR, THE EAVESDROPPER HAD SPED OFF

IT WAS THAT LITTLE SNEAK GUS TREVOR. BOSSY MUST HAVE SENT HIM TO SPY ON US

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT WE EXPECTED TO HAPPEN. WELL, I RECKON THE PLANS WE'VE MADE WILL TEACH BOSSY TO KEEP HIS HANDS OFF SANDY'S MODEL

THAT NIGHT, WHEN THE PALS WENT TO THE DORMITORY, SANDY TOOK A LARGE BOX WITH HIM

GEE, WON'T BOSSY BE CURIOUS TO KNOW WHAT I'VE GOT IN HERE!

WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE SURE OF ATTRACTING HIS ATTENTION BEFORE WE GET INTO BED

HE'LL FALL FOR OUR SCHEME ALL RIGHT

BOSSY AND CO. SAW SANDY AND HIS PALS ENTER—AND WERE AT ONCE INTRIGUED

LOOK--SANDY DEAN MUST HAVE HIS MODEL IN THAT BOX. I WONDER WHY HE'S BROUGHT IT WITH HIM

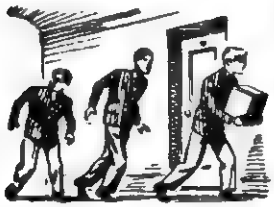
HE'S UP TO SOME TRICKY GAME. LET'S KEEP AN EYE ON HIM

A FEW MINUTES LATER, BOSSY AND CO.'S CURIOSITY WAS FURTHER AROUSED

SAY, BOSSY, SANDY DEAN AND HIS PALS HAVE ONLY PARTLY UNDRESSED! THEY'RE GOING SOMEWHERE AFTER LIGHTS OUT!

S-SSH! NOT A WORD. WHEN THEY LEAVE WE'LL FOLLOW THEM

IT WAS WHEN EVERYONE ELSE APPEARED TO BE ASLEEP THAT SANDY AND CO. STOLE OUT OF THE DORMITORY, TAKING THE BIG BOX WITH THEM. ALL THREE PALS WELL KNEW THAT BOSSY AND HIS CRONIES WOULD SHADOW THEM



SURE ENOUGH, BOSSY AND CO. SILENTLY SNEAKED AFTER THE PALS AND CLIMBED OUT OF A WINDOW WHICH SANDY HAD LEFT OPEN

THERE THEY GO! THEY'RE SNOOPING INTO THE OLD TOWER

I RECKON THEY MEAN TO GIVE SANDY DEAN'S MODEL A SECRET TRIAL. WE'LL HAVE A DEKKO -- AND IF IT COMES ANYWHERE NEAR US WE'LL KICK IT FOR SIX!

IF YOU CAN SMASH DEAN'S MODEL, BOSSY, YOU'LL STAND A BETTER CHANCE OF WINNING THE COMPETITION YOURSELF

CAUTIOUSLY BOSSY AND CO. CREPT INTO THE TOWER

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO 'EM? THEY DON'T SEEM TO BE HERE

UNSEEN BY BOSSY AND CO., SANDY AND HIS PALS WERE WELL UP THE STAIRS, TAKING FROM THE BOX A LOT OF PAPER BATS WITH OUTSTRETCHED WINGS

JEEPERS -- THEY'RE ALMOST LIFELIKE! NOW TO GIVE THOSE SNOOPING SPIES BELOW THE SHOCK OF THEIR LIVES!

THE NEXT MOMENT, GUS TREVOR UTTERED A GASP OF HORROR

WHAT'S UP, GUS?

YOW! A BLINKIN' BAT FLEW RIGHT IN MY FACE

A BAT? UGH! I HATE 'EM!

SUDDENLY, AS SANDY AND HIS PALS EMPTIED THE BOX OF BATS, THE AIR BELOW BECAME FULL OF THEM

HELP! THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF THE BRUTES!

THEY MIGHT BE MAN-EATERS! LET'S SCRAM!

I'M OFF!

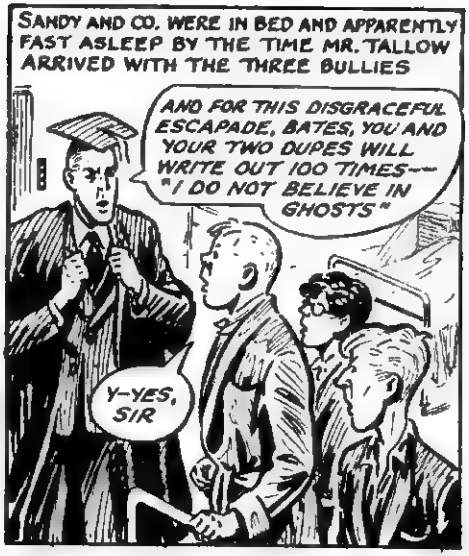
THE TERRIFIED BULLIES RAN FROM THE TOWER -- STRAIGHT INTO FURTHER TROUBLE

OUT OF MY WAY! THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF BATS AFTER ME!

OH, LOR! IT'S A MASTER -- MR. TALLOW!

BOSSY AND CO. DAREN'T ADMIT TO MR. TALLOW THE REAL REASON WHY THEY WERE OUT OF DOORS AT DEAD OF NIGHT. WHILE THEY WERE MAKING UP SOME EXCUSE ABOUT BEING ON A GHOST-HUNT, SANDY AND HIS PALS WERE SLIPPING BACK TO THE DORMITORY IN SAFETY

SANDY AND CO. WERE IN BED AND APPARENTLY FAST ASLEEP BY THE TIME MR. TALLOW ARRIVED WITH THE THREE BULLIES


AND FOR THIS DISGRACEFUL ESCAPADE, BATES, YOU AND YOUR TWO DUPES WILL WRITE OUT 100 TIMES--- "I DO NOT BELIEVE IN GHOSTS"
Y-YES, SIR

WHEN MR. TALLOW HAD GONE, BOSSY HAD A LAST WORD WITH SPIDER

SANDY DEAN HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THAT SWARM OF BATS. BUT I'LL GET EVEN WITH HIM. I'LL FIND A WAY OF COLLARING HIS MODEL BEFORE THE COMPETITION--- AND I'LL SMASH IT TO SMITHEREENS!

SANDY, HOWEVER, KNEW VERY WELL WHAT WAS IN BOSSY'S MIND. SO AFTER LESSONS THE NEXT DAY, THE THREE CHUMS HURRIED TO THEIR STUDY

WE'LL TAKE THIS PLANE ALONG TO TOLL HILL---IT'S JUST THE PLACE FOR A TRIAL FLIGHT. BOSSY IS CERTAIN TO FOLLOW US AGAIN, SO WE'LL GIVE HIM THE CHANCE HE'S BEEN WAITING FOR
HE WON'T DREAM THAT HE'S BEING FOOLED AGAIN. HA, HA, HA!
HE'LL THINK HE'S STOPPING YOU FROM WINNING THE COMPETITION. WHAT A LARK!

EAGER FOR REVENGE ON SANDY, BOSSY AND CO. KEPT A CLOSE WATCH ON THE PALS' MOVEMENTS. AND SOON THEY SAW THEM SET OUT

THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT THIS TIME. THEY'RE GOING TO GIVE DEAN'S MODEL A TRIAL. THIS IS WHERE WE PAY 'EM BACK FOR LAST NIGHT'S TRICK---AND SCUPPER DEAN'S CHANCES IN THE COMPETITION AS WELL

FROM THE TOP OF TOLL HILL, SANDY GAZED BACK IN THE DIRECTION OF THE SCHOOL. THEN HE UNPACKED THE BOX

DON'T LOOK NOW, CHAPS, BUT BOSSY AND CO. ARE HIDING BEHIND THOSE TREES AT THE BOTTOM. SO THAT'S THE WAY WE'LL SEND THE PLANE
BOSSY'LL THINK HIS LUCK IS RIGHT IN. LITTLE DOES HE KNOW THE WAY HE'S BEING FOOLED!

CAREFULLY SANDY LAUNCHED THE PLANE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE HIDDEN BULLIES

WELL, WHAT D'YOU KNOW, BOYS! IT'S COMING STRAIGHT FOR US

AS THE PLANE GLIDED TO THE GROUND, BOSSY AND CO. MADE A BEE-LINE FOR IT
WE'LL REACH IT LONG BEFORE SANDY DEAN. AND HE WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE WHAT WE'RE DOING BECAUSE WE'RE SCREENED BY THE TREES
THIS IS WHERE THE ROTTER MAKES HIS EXIT FROM THE COMPETITION!

AND IT WAS BOSSY'S FOOT THAT DID THE DAMAGE
WHAT ROTTEN LUCK, SANDY! IT MUST HAVE CRASHED ON LANDING

WHEN SANDY AND CO. GOT TO THE PLANE, THE BULLIES HAD VANISHED. BUT THE PALS KNEW THAT THEY WERE CROUCHING IN THE NEARBY BUSHES, SO THEY PRETENDED TO BE HORRIFIED AT WHAT HAD HAPPENED
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO ENTER IT IN THE COMPETITION NOW

FROM THEIR HIDING-PLACE BOSSY AND CO. SAW AND OVERHEARD EVERYTHING. THEY DIDN'T REALISE THEY WERE BEING SPOOFED!
THAT'S PUT PAID TO SANDY DEAN'S MODEL. NOTHING CAN STOP YOU WINNING THE COMPETITION NOW, BOSSY
NICE WORK. WE'LL GO AND PICK UP MY MODEL RIGHT AWAY, BOYS

BOSSY AND CO. STEALTHILY HURRIED OFF TO SOME RUINS. SANDY AND HIS PALS WENT THAT WAY, TOO, AND ~~
HALF A MINUTE, SANDY. BOSSY SEEMS TO HAVE A DATE WITH SOMEONE HERE
H'M! I THINK I RECOGNISE THE BOY WHO'S COMING TOWARDS HIM

BOSSY TOOK THE BOX WHICH THE NEWCOMER WAS CARRYING
HAS YOUR FATHER MADE A GOOD JOB OF IT ?
'COURSE HE HAS. IT'S A BEAUTY
SANDY AND HIS PALS SAW BOSSY TAKE A MODEL PLANE FROM THE BOX
THAT BOY IS MICK MARTIN. HIS FATHER IS AN EXPERT MODEL-MAKER
GOSH! SO BOSSY HAS BOUGHT A MODEL FROM HIM, AND MEANS TO ENTER IT IN THE COMPETITION AND PRETEND HE'S MADE IT HIMSELF
WHAT A ROTTEN TRICK!
BOSSY HANDED THE BOY SOME MONEY
YOU'D BETTER BEAT IT NOW — IF WE'RE SEEN TOGETHER SOMEBODY MIGHT BECOME SUSPICIOUS
AFTER MICK MARTIN HAD GONE, SANDY AND HIS PALS TURNED AWAY IN DISGUST
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO, SANDY? WE CAN'T LET BOSSY GET AWAY WITH IT
HE OUGHT TO BE EXPOSED, BUT I DON'T LIKE BRINGING DISGRACE ON THE FOURTH
QUITE BY CHANCE, MICK MARTIN SAW THE THREE PALS. INSTANTLY HE RAN BACK TO BOSSY AND CO.
SANDY DEAN AND TWO OTHERS ARE IN THE TREES JUST OVER THERE. THEY MUST KNOW THAT YOUR MODEL WAS MADE BY MY FATHER!
THEN — THEN WE'RE SUNK, BOSSY. YOU WON'T DARE ENTER THE PLANE IN THE COMPETITION NOW!
BOSSY LOOKED VERY TAKEN ABACK AT FIRST. BUT THEN —
I'VE MADE UP MY MIND TO WIN THE PRIZE, AND NOTHING WILL STOP ME. I'M GOING TO FIX THINGS SO THAT SANDY DEAN WON'T BE ABLE TO DO ANY BLABBING UNTIL THE COMPETITION IS OVER — AND THEN NO ONE WILL BELIEVE HIM

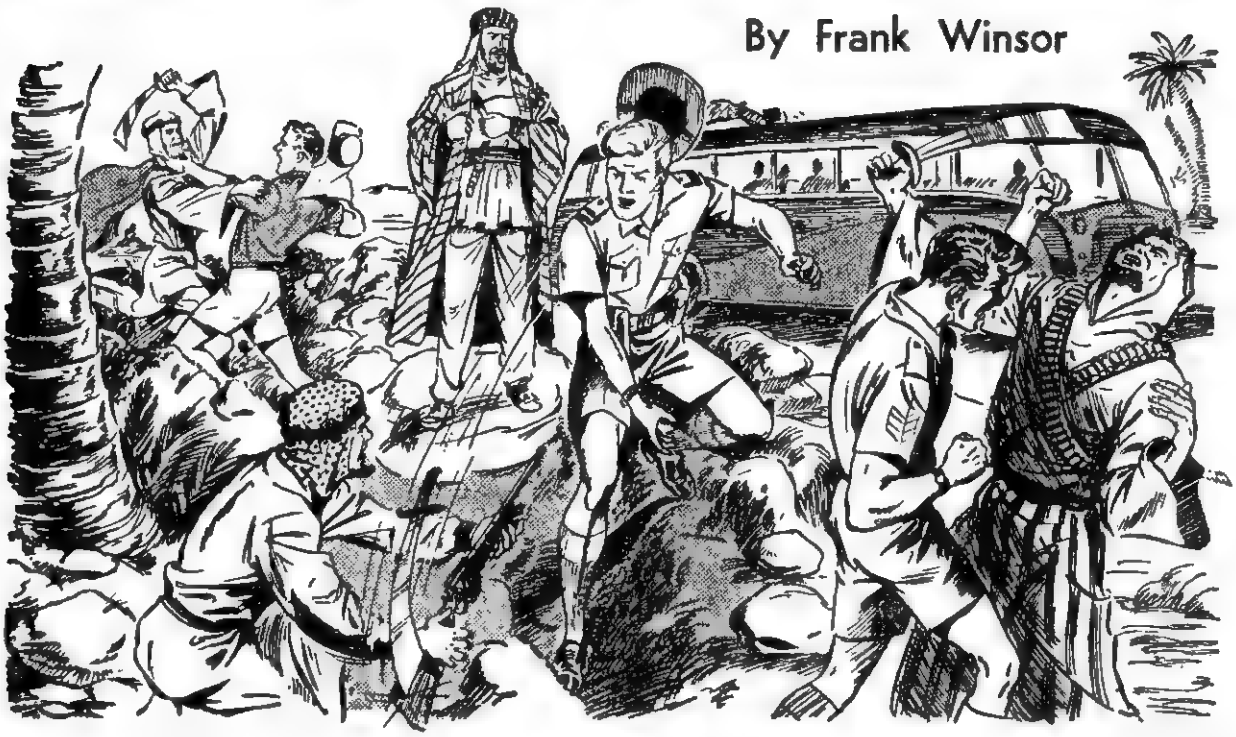
ON RETURNING TO TOLLGATE, SANDY SET TO WORK ON THE DAMAGED MODEL
IT'LL LOOK A VERY POOR EFFORT, SANDY
NO MATTER, JACK. IT'LL SERVE IT'S PURPOSE AND FOOL BOSSY
WHAT THE REPAIRED PLANE LOOKED LIKE!
AND WHEN SANDY TOOK THE MODEL DOWN TO THE EXHIBITION STAND---
HA, HA, HA! FANCY ENTERING A THING LIKE THAT!
HAS IT BEEN IN AN ATOMIC EXPLOSION, SANDY?
THE JUDGE WILL HAVE A FIT WHEN HE SEES IT
WHILE SANDY WAS PLACING HIS MODEL ON VIEW, BOSSY BATES WAS GIVING INSTRUCTIONS TO INKY STEVENS, A THIRD FORMER
THERE'S SANDY DEAN NOW. DO YOUR STUFF AND I'LL GIVE YOU A COUPLE OF BOB
INKY STEVENS RACED UP TO SANDY, JACK AND OWL
THE SCHOOL CAPTAIN WANTS TO SEE THE THREE OF YOU INSIDE THE OLD TOWER AT ONCE. HE TOLD ME TO TELL YOU TO HURRY
WONDERING WHY THEY WERE WANTED, SANDY AND CO. HEADED FOR THE TOWER. BOSSY AND HIS TOADIES WATCHED THEM GLEEFULLY
THEY'VE FALLEN FOR IT! ANOTHER COUPLE OF SECONDS AND WE'LL HAVE THEM JUST WHERE WE WANT THEM
AND THEN NOTHING CAN STOP YOU WINNING THE PRIZE, BOSSY

AS SOON AS SANDY AND CO. HAD ENTERED THE TOWER, BOSSY DARTED FORWARD
SHUT THE DOOR, BOSSY – QUICK!
AND TURN THE KEY SO THAT THEY CAN'T GET OUT!
INSIDE THE TOWER –
SANDY! THAT TWISTER BATES HAS LOCKED US IN. I HEARD HIS VOICE
DON'T GET EXCITED, OWL. HE'S PLAYED RIGHT INTO OUR HANDS
A FEW MINUTES LATER, THE HEADMASTER AND A DISTINGUISHED COLONEL ARRIVED TO JUDGE THE MODELS
HAVE YOU SEEN BOSSY'S? IT'S A STUNNER!
WAIT UNTIL THEY SPOT SANDY'S MODEL!
THE INSTANT THE COLONEL SAW SANDY'S MODEL, HE PICKED IT UP WITH A FROWN
H'M! SO THIS-ER-THING HAS BEEN EXHIBITED BY A BOY NAMED SANDY DEAN. IT MUST BE HIS IDEA OF A JOKE
GOOD GRACIOUS! THIS IS DISGRACEFUL! I SHALL HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY TO HIM LATER ON
AND THEN THE JUDGE PICKED UP BOSSY'S PLANE
NOW THIS MODEL SHOWS REALLY EXPERT CRAFTSMANSHIP. I DOUBT VERY MUCH WHETHER WE SHALL FIND ANYTHING TO BEAT IT, DR. STANTON
HEAR THAT, BOSSY? YOU'LL WIN THE BIKE!
GUS TREVOR SPOKE TOO SOON, HOWEVER. FOR SANDY WAS THRUSTING SOMETHING THROUGH A WINDOW AT THE TOP OF THE TOWER
WHAT A STROKE OF LUCK THAT YOU HAD KEPT IT HIDDEN IN HERE, SANDY!
THAT'S WHY I WASN'T WORRIED WHEN BOSSY LOCKED US IN
A SUDDEN SHOUT FROM A BOY AT THE EDGE OF THE CROWD MADE EVERYONE SWING ROUND
LOOK! LOOK!
GOOD – GOOD GRACIOUS!
WHY – BLESS MY SOUL!

FLYING FROM THE TOP OF THE TOWER WHERE SANDY AND CO. WERE IMPRISONED CAME A MAGNIFICENT MODEL PLANE
PHEW! IT'S A HELICOPTER--AND THERE'S A STREAMER FIXED TO IT!
BUT HOW DID IT GET HERE? AND WHO MADE IT?
THE COLONEL CAUGHT THE MODEL IN HIS HAND
THIS IS MY REAL COMPETITION MODEL SANDY OCAN
SEE WHAT'S WRITTEN ON THE STREAMER? COME ON, CHAPS- TO THE RESCUE!
THIS HELICOPTER IS EASILY THE BEST MODEL IN THE COMPETITION. ITS MAKER GETS THE FIRST PRIZE -A BICYCLE
RELEASED FROM THE TOWER, SANDY WENT FORWARD TO RECEIVE HIS AWARD
CONGRATULATIONS, MY BOY. YOU THOROUGHLY DESERVE THE BICYCLE
WELL DONE, DEAN. I DON'T KNOW WHO LOCKED YOU IN THE TOWER, BUT THE FOOLISH JAPE FAILED TO PREVENT YOU FROM WINNING THE PRIZE
GOOD OLD SANDY! HURRAH!
SANDY JUMPED ON TO THE BIKE TO TRY IT, AND STEERED STRAIGHT FOR BOSSY. THE BULLY UTTERED A YELL, DIVED TO ONE SIDE, AND--
YOW! HELP!
WHAT'S WRONG, BOSSY? YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BATH IN THE SCHOOL FOUNTAIN
SANDY THEN LED A TRIUMPHANT PROCESSION TO THE TUCKSHOP
COME ON, BOYS! LET'S HAVE A CELEBRATION!
BUNS AND LEMONADE ALL ROUND. EVERYONE'S WELCOME--
EXCEPT BOSSY AND CO. HA, HA, HA!

BODYGUARD to the DESERT SHEIK

By Frank Winsor



UP AGAINST KIDNAPPERS

WITH a screech of brakes, the long-bonneted, army-type lorry slithered to a halt outside the glistening white stone building that was the palace of Sheik Hafd El Kebir, ruler of the Middle East state of Corabia.

From the driving seat sprang Captain Ted Jackson, late of the Royal Tank Corps, commander of the Sheik's bodyguard. A dashing figure in spotless khaki drill uniform, a new white topee jauntily on one side of his head, Ted took the flight of steps into the palace in three athletic strides. Guards sprang to attention as he burst in through the swing doors, and strode along the thick carpet that led to the Sheik's throne. He swung up a sizzling salute.

"I come at your command, O Sheik," he said crisply. "You have an urgent mission for me?"

The Sheik, resplendent in green turban and multi-coloured, flowing robe, bowed gravely, and motioned Ted to a nearby chair.

"During the Great War of the white men, you once saved my life at the hands of the Germans, O Jackson-sahib," he said. "And that is why I employ you as chief of my bodyguard. Now I offer you the chance to save the life of my brother, the esteemed Emir Mustafa Azziz, who is coming across the desert from Port Helfik to see me. I have received this letter—"

The Sheik tossed over a parchment covered in Arabic writing. During the past seven years' employment with the Sheik, in which he had had enough thrills to last the average adventurer a life-time, Ted had learnt to read the local handwriting. The message he now deciphered made him spring to his feet.

"Have five thousand gold piastres ready in a casket," read the message. "It will be the ransom for your esteemed brother, the Emir Mustafa Azziz, who will not reach you alive unless you pay the money."

"The Green Dagger."

"The Green Dagger!" exclaimed Ted. "That cut-throat bandit chief who haunts the Wadi El Tara! He's got the cheek to try to capture your brother."

"Exactly," nodded the Sheik. "That is why I entrust you with the task of seeing that my brother reaches here safely. Fail not. You will be well rewarded. Take my own Rolls Royce with you to bring my brother here."

Ted swung up another smart salute.

"Have no fear, Sheik," he said. "I am already thinking of a plan to make sure that the Emir reaches here safely without any ransom being paid."

Ted knew that he had a tough job ahead of him. He had already had more than one brush with the Green Dagger bandits, who infested the Wadi El Tara. Ted was determined to foil the bandits in their bid to kidnap the Sheik's brother, the Emir Mustafa Azziz.

He Set Out to Unmask the Mystery Leader of Arab Outlaws

Choosing twelve of the best men of the large bodyguard he commanded, Ted set out across the desert towards Port Helfik on board his lorry. The lorry looked like any other trader's lorry on the desert, but Ted had had a special high-powered engine fitted under its bonnet. When he trod on the accelerator the lorry would go like a bullet.

"One thing's dead certain," Ted muttered, as he glanced at the shining Rolls Royce purring along ahead of the lorry. "That palace on wheels is just asking to be held up by half the bandits in the Middle East."

He clicked his fingers as an idea came to him.

"I'll get old Emir Mustafa to travel by on the desert bus. It's comfortable and air conditioned. Then I'll rig up a dummy Emir in the Rolls, and if the Green Dagger attacks it, I'll be ready for him. If the Emir's anything like his brother the Sheik, he'll enter into the spirit of the thing."

But Ted had a shock when he met the Emir in Port Helfik. The Emir was as much like his brother as a cactus was like a cauliflower. Ted met him in the lounge of Port Helfik's one hotel, and the Emir was surrounded by hotel servants who were bowing and scraping. He was tall, lean and hawk-faced, with an expression as if he had a permanent bad smell under his nose. Although Ted took an instant dislike to him, he swung up a smart salute.

"Jackson, commander of Sheik El Kebir's bodyguard at your service," he said crisply.

"When you speak to me you will address me as 'Your Excellency'!" sneered the Emir, looking Ted up and down, upper lip curling. "Since you are a servant of my brother's you can show your servility to our family by cleaning my shoes."

Ted looked down at the Emir's feet. It was true that the ruler's shoes needed cleaning. They were of red leather, with turned-up, pointed toes, but though normally well-polished, were at present coated round the sides with a greyish-green mud.

Ted barked out an order and one of his bodyguard came forward, borrowed some brushes off a hotel servant, and set about the task of cleaning the shoes.

The Emir turned red with anger.

"Dog!" he bawled at Ted. "Why do you not obey my orders, and clean the shoes yourself?"

Ted looked him straight in the eyes.

"I'm not here to take orders of that sort," he snapped. "In fact I'm here to give orders. I'm to protect you from the Green Dagger bandits. If you don't do as I say, there's every chance that you'll fall into their hands.

"You're not going to travel in the Sheik's posh Rolls," he went on grimly. "You're going to travel on the desert bus to Corabia. The bandits will attack the Rolls—but they'll let the bus go through—and I and my men will give them the shock of their lives when we hit 'em. Are you going to obey my orders?"

For a moment it looked as if the Emir was going to explode. Then his eyes took on a startled look. Obviously his fear of the bandits had overcome his arrogance, Ted reckoned. The Emir turned to a servant and barked out some orders in a dialect that Ted did not understand. Then he turned back to Ted.

"So the proud infidel is afraid of being attacked by a handful of desert nomads?" he sneered. "So be it. I would rather travel by desert bus than place myself in the hands of a frightened man. I have given orders for my baggage to be placed aboard the bus."

The bus was a giant Diesel-engined vehicle, with eight huge wheels. The bus was sixty feet long, and ten feet wide. It was built to cross the desert, its passengers sitting in its luxurious saloon quite unaware of the bumps and ruts of the tracks over which it hurtled.

When the bus trundled out of Port Helfik, the Sheik's Rolls followed a couple of miles behind, a life-like dummy of the Emir perched on the rear seat. A mile or so behind the Rolls, Ted sat at the wheel of his high-speed lorry, hawk-like eyes on the alert for the Green Dagger's desert raiders.

"The Wadi El Tara!" he breathed at last. "If we're going to run into trouble, this is where we'll hit it!" His eyes narrowed as a cloud of dust suddenly appeared from the side of the trail ahead. "By Jove—there they are—the Green Dagger band!"

The cloud of whirling sand came hurtling across the desert towards the three vehicles. Presently Ted's narrowed eyes could see half a hundred horsemen galloping like fury on their magnificent Arab ponies. Sun glinted on swords, puffs of smoke rose into the air, and muffled reports sounded as the attackers fired their rifles into the air.

"They'll attack the Rolls, thinking the Emir is in it," Ted muttered. "What a shock they'll get when they find the dummy instead!"

But it was Ted who got the shock!

For at the last moment the attacking band swerved—and went galloping straight towards the desert bus!

"They're going for the real Emir!" Ted gasped. "Somehow they must have rumbled my plan. We've got to go to the rescue."

And Ted stabbed his foot down hard on the accelerator!

BARE FISTS v. RIFLES AND SWORDS

BY the time Ted brought the lorry to a screeching halt near the bus, the giant vehicle had been halted, and a score of Arab bandit horsemen were circling it.

In the centre of the ring of horsemen was a giant, red-bearded ruffian. He led some of his men towards the bus itself, obviously intending to fling open the door and plunder the passengers within.

"Off the lorry! Spread out!" Ted yelled.

At his brisk command his highly trained men poured off the back of the lorry, and dropped behind the nearest cover, spread out in a long line, rifles loaded and at the ready.

Another command. Ted's men aimed above the heads of the attacking bandits, and the crisp crackle of controlled rifle fire rang out.

The bandits stopped circling the bus and turned to meet the new attack.

Crrr-rrrack-ack-ack!

Another volley from Ted's men—and this time it

wasn't aimed high. Bandits were bowled headlong from their saddles. But still they came on.

Ted shouted to his second-in-command.

"Sergeant-major, keep 'em busy here. Sergeant Hassan, come with me. We've got to go in and safeguard the Emir."

Ted, the sergeant, and two other men, crept from cover to cover until they were almost on the bus. They arrived in time to see the red-bearded bandit swing open the doors.

Inside, was the cowering figure of the Emir. Red-beard jerked the ugly-looking sword he carried in a gesture to the ruler to come out. Between Ted and the scene were a dozen heavily armed cut-throats. Direct attack would be hopeless.

Taking his life in his hands, Ted sped to the rear of the bus. He sprinted up the ladder that led to the roof of the vehicle, and picked his way over the baggage that was stowed there until he found himself looking down on the giant, red-bearded bandit.

Swooosh! Thud!

Ted took off in a flying leap and landed on the broad shoulders of red-beard. Red-beard said "Agh!" and dropped to the ground like a pricked balloon. Ted grabbed the sword from his hand and sprang lightly to his feet, ready to take on all-comers.

Nearby, Sergeant Hassan was locked in a struggle with a bandit. Another bandit a bit farther away, was crouched on one knee, taking aim with a rifle at the Sergeant's back.

Ted didn't hesitate. He flung his sword with all his force.

Whummmmm!

The blade whistled through the air for some yards—and knocked the rifle spinning from the marksman's hands.

Another bandit sprang at Ted, rifle raised to bring the butt crashing down on his head. Ted saw him coming, swayed his body aside in the nick of time, and let fly with a sizzling right uppercut.

The bandit did a back somersault. His flying feet brought down another couple of cut-throats as he crashed to the sand. Ted grabbed up the man's rifle, and stood there, panting, his back to the Emir, ready to defend the Sheik's brother to the last gasp.

Suddenly—

Thwack!

Ted never knew what hit him, but something descended on the back of his skull with sickening force. With a groan, he dropped to the sand and rolled over—and that was the last he knew of the battle in the desert.

When he came to, all was silent. Ted found his head propped up on something soft. He rolled over and stared—his head had been resting on the dummy of the Emir which he had rigged in the back of the Rolls.

Of the Rolls there was no sign. Instead, the Sheik El Kebir was standing over him, looking down at him with a pained expression on his face. The Sheik had driven out to meet the Emir in a spare vehicle—an amphibious jeep that could travel on land or on water.

"So, Jackson-sahib, you have failed me!" said the Sheik, his voice filled with disappointment and anxiety. "Look!"

Ted looked. Pinned to the chest of the dummy was a message in Arabic writing. It read:

"This dummy did not fool us. If you want your brother back alive, place 5,000 golden piastres on the Camel Head Rock at dawn to-morrow. It will be collected in your Rolls Royce. Failure to comply, and any attempt to follow our messenger, will result in the death of the Emir, and the destruction of your car."

"The bandits! They've got away with the Emir—and your car!" gasped Ted.

"Exactly," replied the Sheik. "I cannot afford to ignore the warning. The ransom money will have to be paid!"

Ted clenched his fists with anger as he realised that everything had gone wrong. Somehow the bandits had rumbled his ruse to send the Emir by bus instead of in the Sheik's car.

It was the first time that Ted could remember letting his kind-hearted and generous chief down, and he vowed that somehow he'd get the Emir back safe and sound, arrogant and unpleasant though he might be.

Ted's alert eyes scanned the scene of the recent battle, searching for clues that would tell him anything about the bandits—where they came from, how they had seen through his dodge with the dummy.

Several wounded bandits still lay on the desert. Ted surveyed them carefully, his eyes always coming to rest on their feet—on their hide slippers with the turned up, pointed toes.

Suddenly he turned to the Sheik.

"I reckon I'll be able to get the Emir back," he said. "Will you let me take the money to the Camel Head Rock? I've a hunch that before I've finished, the Green Daggers won't dare harm a hair of your brother's head."

The Sheik hesitated.

"Very well," he said at last. "But no pursuing the bandits. I shall impound your fast lorry so that you can't give chase to them."

Ted's eyes gleamed.

"That suits me!" he said. "The lorry wouldn't be any good to me for the job I'll have to do, and the place I'll have to go. Just let me have that amphibious jeep of yours—and I'll fix the bandits for good and all. I'll give 'em Green Daggers!"

THE SECRET STRONGHOLD

JUST before dawn the next morning, Ted, accompanied by Sergeant Hassan and two other men of the Sheik's bodyguard, drove up to the rock shaped in the form of a camel's head which dominated the Wadi El Tara. They were aboard the Sheik's amphibious jeep, a slow, ponderous vehicle that could travel over land or on water, and which the Sheik sometimes used for travelling to the islands in the estuary of the river which ran through his territory.

Pulling up at the rock, Ted took the casket of golden piastres the Sheik had given him and placed it in a sack which he found lying on the flat top of

the rock. Then he returned to the jeep and drove back in the direction of the palace.

He hadn't gone more than a mile when he suddenly turned off the track, drove round in a wide circle, and came out on the top of an escarpment overlooking the Camel Head Rock.

Sergeant Hassan looked at him sharply.

"What are you going to do, sahib?" he asked. "Surely not disobey the Sheik's orders?"

"Maybe I've got to!" replied Ted. "It's the only way of getting the Emir back. Somehow I've got a hunch that the Green Dagger won't kill his Excellency! Watch!"

A cloud of dust had appeared in the distance. Ted saw that it was made by the Sheik's captured car, being driven fast. The vehicle was crammed with heavily-armed cut-throats.

The car came to a halt by the Camel Head Rock. Three men alighted. While two stood guard, the third grabbed the sack, checked inside to see that the ransom money was there and swung it into the back of the car. Then the bandits drove off.

Ted stabbed the self-starter of his jeep. He swung it round and went back the way he had come at full speed, down the Wadi, and tearing along in the wake of the Rolls Royce.

The big car was well out of sight, but Ted seemed to know which way to go, even though the ground here was too rough and stony for the bandit's vehicle to leave any tracks.

Sergeant Hassan looked puzzled.

"How do you know the way, sahib?" he demanded.

"I've got a clue—a very slender clue to their destination," said Ted. "You'll see soon enough."

For ten or fifteen miles Ted drove on. The valley seemed to come to an end, and they were surrounded on all sides by high cliffs.

Then Sergeant Hassan saw that a narrow gorge led downhill to another valley which ran at right angles to the one they were in, and at a much lower level. The tracks of the big car showed clearly, leading across to a piece of high ground in the centre of the valley.

Without hesitation, Ted drove down into the valley. But as they made to cross the low-lying stretch of sand towards the high land in the middle, an amazing thing began to happen.

The floor of the valley began to glisten. The tracks of the Rolls began to dissolve. Water began to seep up through the sand. Presently it was shimmering silver in the early morning light. The jeep's wheels were enveloped in it, and the water was rising, rising——

"Careful, sahib!" cried Sergeant Hassan. "The water will swamp us. We shall all be drowned!"

"Not on your life!" chuckled Ted. "This amphibious jeep floats and goes like a motor-boat. That's why I asked the Sheik to let me borrow it!"

Presently Ted felt the jeep lifted from the ground by the depth of water. He operated a lever, and a propeller set in the stern of the vehicle began to revolve and drive the craft along. The jeep had been turned into a motor-boat!

"And here is the Green Dagger himself!" Ted announced dramatically. The Sheik eyed with interest the trussed-up figure at his feet—but he was due for a staggering surprise when Ted removed the sack from the man's head.

"I knew that this valley was below the level of the sea in the Gulf of Corabia," exclaimed Ted. "At high tide, the water comes up through the sand and floods the place—all except the high land in the centre. The Green Dagger gang have often used that fact to cut off their pursuers after a raid."

Over on the high ground in the centre of the valley, which now formed an island, the chief of the bandits—who called himself "The Green Dagger"—was peering out across the water at the jeep.

"Give them a volley, men!" he roared. "Then keep silence, while I send them a warning."

Crack-ack-ack!

Half-a-dozen bandit rifles barked, and bullets skimmed the water all round the jeep. The Green

Dagger chuckled with satisfaction as he saw the craft swing round and come to a halt.

"Go back to your Sheik!" he shouted through cupped hands. "Come a foot nearer, and his brother the Emir will die!"

To the Green Dagger's triumph, the jeep turned round in a wide circle, and went chugging away, leaving in its wake what looked like an empty petrol tin floating on the water. The tin was a large, square, four gallon type commonly used in the Middle East.

The wind appeared to catch the tin, and it floated nearer and nearer to the island. The Green Dagger didn't give it more than a glance.

Which was a good thing for Ted. For it was he who had thrown the petrol tin overboard, one end of it having been cut right off. He had then lowered himself over the edge of the jeep on the side farthest from the bandits, and put the tin over his head. Using the tin as a sort of camouflage, peering through a small hole bored in its side, he propelled himself across the water!

SMASHING THE BANDITS SINGLE-HANDED

ROUND the back of the island Ted went, and then hauled himself ashore at a point behind the bandits. They were still watching the jeep, which had now come to a halt at the far side of the water.

Suddenly the bandit nearest Ted turned and saw him. He stared as Ted arose like Neptune from the deep. Then he opened his mouth to yell a warning.

Clop! Ted sprang at him, fist swinging, slammed his mouth shut for him, and knocked him headlong, kicking, into the sand.

A dozen strides, and Ted was crouching on top of a flat rock, looking down on the Green Dagger.

"Why has the lorry stopped?" the Green Dagger was asking. "We will hurry them on their way. Fi—"

Thump!

Just as the bandit chief was giving the order to fire, Ted hurled himself from the rock above, landing astride the Green Dagger's shoulders, and sending him sprawling. On the ground nearby was the sack which had contained the casket of gold coins of the ransom money. Ted grabbed the sack, and with a swift movement, whipped it over his captive's head and down round his waist, pulling the rope round the neck of the sack tight.

The he jabbed his pistol into the small of the Green Dagger's back.

"Order your men to cease fire!" he barked. "Tell them to throw down their arms and raise their hands. You've got until I count three to do it, or I'll shoot you like the dog you are!"

The terrified Green Dagger, not so courageous when he had a gun pointing at the small of his own back, swiftly ordered his men to lay down their rifles.

Ten minutes later the jeep came across to the island, and the grinning Sergeant Hassan collected all the weapons and covered the bandits with his own gun.

Within three hours the water had subsided as the tide on the nearby estuary went out. Ted placed the Green Dagger in the Rolls Royce and then drove it across the valley. Sergeant Hassan followed, the bandit gang roped together in a long line marching ahead of his jeep.

Sheik Hafd El Kebir's eyes nearly popped out of his head when his own big car drew up outside his palace, with Ted at the wheel, and a roped up man in the back, his head enveloped in a sack.

As Ted stepped out, he solemnly presented the Sheik with the casket of ransom money.

"The ransom money is returned to you, O Sheik!" he said. "And here is the Green Dagger himself!"

He opened the back of the car and hauled the bound figure from the vehicle, slumping him at the Sheik's feet.

The Sheik stared in horror.

"But—but what about my brother, Emir Mustafa? Did the Green Dagger scoundrels kill him before you captured them?"

Ted didn't say a word. He simply bent, pulled a slip-knot, and the sack came away from the Green Dagger's shoulders.

Sheik El Kebir let out a gasp as he stared at the bandit chief.

"The Emir Mustafa Azziz!" he cried. "My own brother! What does this mean?"

Ted swiftly explained that the Emir was the bandit chief!

"He planned to have himself kidnapped so that he could get a nice fat ransom prize out of you without you even suspecting what he was doing," Ted pointed out. "He made a big mistake when he tried to be clever and make me clean his shoes for him when I met him in Port Helfik. It drew my attention to the fact that he had a peculiar type of green-grey mud on his shoes.

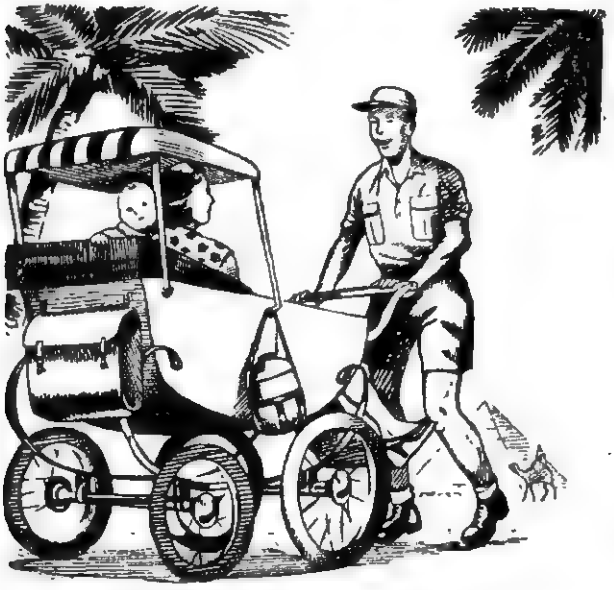
"Unfortunately for him, I noticed that the bandits who attacked the bus also had the same kind of mud on their shoes—mud which you only find in the low valley beyond Wadi El Tara. I was also suspicious that my ruse to send the Emir on the bus was so swiftly transmitted to the bandits. The Emir spoke to a servant after I'd told him my plan, and he passed the information on. Also, at the fight in the desert, I was knocked down from behind—only the Emir was standing behind me at the time. He must have done it.

"I had to stake everything on my hunch that the Emir and the Green Dagger were the same person. Of course the Green Dagger wouldn't order himself to be killed!"

"For this treachery the authorities will banish my evil brother. As for you, O Jackson-sahib, once again you have served me well," cried the Sheik. "Please accept this as a token of my esteem, and as a reward for rounding up the Green Dagger gang!"

And the Sheik solemnly handed Ted the casket containing the five thousand golden piastres—an Emir's ransom!

Amazing FEATS by Amazing PEOPLE

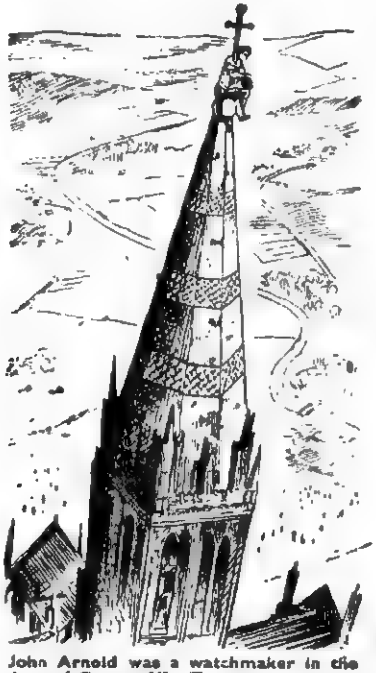


Anton Hanisian thought it would be a good idea to take his wife and child to "see the world." So he had a special pram made for them, and he pushed it for 15,000 miles. The journey lasted nearly two years.

Harry Kahne had the curious hobby of hanging upside-down and writing the right way up. While doing so, he recited poems.

An inventor sat in an armchair which was then dropped down a lift shaft. He considered this to be the best way of demonstrating the quality of the springs which he had fitted to the chair.

Joe Jeanette, a Negro, was so proud of his tough stomach muscles that he invited boxers to use his body as a punchbag! He also liked heavy medicine balls being hurled at him.



John Arnold was a watchmaker in the days of George III. To attract custom, he mended watches while sitting on the top of Salisbury Cathedral spire—404 feet above the ground.

GO-GETTER GUS—Autograph Hunter

"AUTOGRAPH HUNTERS FORBIDDEN!"

By Ray Buckingham

"GOSH, look out, chaps, here comes that prize idiot, my brother Gus!"

Gerry Gilmore gave his chums a frantic signal to hide and dodged to the side of the road as he saw Gus come cycling into view.

Gerry was in the Remove at the Grammar School, but Gus, two years older, was in the Fifth. It was always said that Gerry had the brains, and Gus the brawn. But Gus also possessed confidence. He imagined he could cycle to the moon if he had the right sort of bike. He would have a go anyway.

When Gus saw the three chaps standing by the stile, he frowned and dismounted. He felt it was his duty to keep an eye on his younger brother.

"Gerry," he said, sternly, "I've told you before about this. A film company is rehearsing to shoot a film here. You know it's out of bounds."

"That's what it says on the notice board," agreed Gerry cheerfully. "But I have an appointment there, as it happens, Gus."

"With the film people?" asked his brother in surprise.

"No, with a man—ah, here he comes, chaps," said Gerry.

They all turned as a man came hurrying up to them. The newcomer was a man of middle-age, with chubby cheeks and white hair. He was carrying a large book and smiling.

"Ah, here you are, my boy," he said, giving Gerry the book. "Here it is. But don't do it if it is risky, or if you're liable to be punished. The price is ten shillings. Agreed?"

"Agreed!" said Gerry, "Righto, sir, I'll get it for you."

"Thank you, I am most grateful," returned the stranger, and hurried off.

Gus Gilmore stood by, puzzled. He did not have as quick a brain as his brother and he didn't quite follow what was going on.

"Have you bought that book from him?" he asked Gerry. "I thought you only had sixpence?"

"Of course Gerry hasn't bought it," scoffed one chap. "It's an autograph book, and that chap, Mr. Thugden, collects autographs."

Gus smirked.

"Well, that's not much trouble. I've got my pen. Hand over the book and I'll autograph it now."

"You'll what?" gasped the astounded Gerry.

"Ha, ha, ha," came the delighted roar from his pals.

"Mr. Thugden collects autographs of *famous*

Monkey Tricks Don't Often Pay—But Gus's Ape Jape Did!

people," chuckled Gerry. "He wants the autograph of Kenyan Nyle, the film actor who is rehearsing here. And he's offered me ten shillings to get it for him."

"Ten shillings?" echoed Gus, "Just for getting an autograph?"

Gerry pointed to the notice board behind them:

"Autograph hunters forbidden. Trespassers will be chased off. Keep Out!"

"I shall be taking a chance," said Gerry. "You see, Mr. Thugden had a row with Mr. Nyle so he can't get the autograph himself."

Gus held out his hand.

"Give me that book," he said pompously. "As your eldest brother, I'm the chap to see this through. It's a matter that needs handling with tact."

"Mr Thugden asked *me* to get it," said Gerry, drawing back. "He certainly didn't ask you to butt in, Gus."

"No arguments," frowned Gus. "Hand over that autograph book."

"You don't even know Kenyan Nyle," said Gerry wrathfully.

"I'll find out, or you can tell me—or else!" warned Gus. "Discipline. That's what you need, my lad! I'm taking no nonsense from fags."

Gerry winked at his pals. He was going to pull his brother's leg.

"Mr. Nyle is the chap who played the part of a monster ape in that jungle film we saw together," explained Gerry. "You said he wasn't an actor, but a real chimp. Telling a star that would be a good start to asking for his autograph. It flatters him." Gerry choked down his mirth as Gus took it all in.

"I knew it was an actor all along," scowled Gus, "Films can't fool me! Now give me that book. If you don't hand it over before I count ten—" he ended warningly.

"You always get stuck at eight, so why should I worry?" said Gerry lightly.

Gus rested his cycle against the hedge. He was getting angry.

"I'm the last chap to bully or throw my weight about," he said. "So I'm quite ready to go halves with the ten shillings."

"Halves? Oh, how generous," gasped Gerry overcome.

"Well, there's nothing mean about me," swanked Gus. "I'm willing to cut you in. But if you handle this yourself, there won't even be five shillings to divide. These film stars are frightfully touchy. But they wouldn't dare try anything with me. People can see I'm a fighter by looking at me."

"They can tell something's happened to your face," cracked the annoyed Gerry. "But Gus, old pal, you're not going to have this book!"

"Then," said Gus, "I'll have your cap."

He snatched at his brother's cap and as Gerry put up his hand to save it, Gus seized the unguarded autograph book and pulled it from Gerry's grasp. He pushed Gerry into the ditch, and, handing off the other two boys with ease, he vaulted over the stile.

"You stay here, Gerry," he ordered. "I'm going to give you a surprise. I'll be back in a minute."

Gerry flung a leg over the stile and then hesitated.

"The ass will be back, all right," he said frowning. "But I hope he brings that book back safely. It's worth a small fortune with those valuable signatures in it."

"Why did you tell Gus that Kenyan Nyle played the part of an ape, Gerry?" one of his pals asked.

"Because there really is an ape here," said Gerry with a faint grin," and if Gus asks it for its autograph—that should be worth seeing. You see it wasn't an actor dressed up in that film we saw, but a real chimp!"

Gerry suddenly came to a decision.

"I think I'll follow Gus and see what happens."

He leapt the stile and went after his brother, who was far ahead.

Gus was full of confidence. He knew he could pull off a little job like this. Not many fellows have the tact to collect an autograph from a hostile actor. But Gus was different; He had his methods.

When he was about fifty yards from the road, he came to a glade where some men were talking near a camera and other film equipment; he braced himself.

He saw the chap he was looking for in the middle of the set, eating a banana. So that was Kenyan Nyle, so amazingly well made-up that at first glance Gus mistook him for a real chimpanzee. And so would anyone else—but a second glance would have shown them it *was* a real chimpanzee. That was just another way in which Gus was different.

He set his tie straight, and stepped forward to the chimpanzee.

"Pardon me, Mr. Nyle," he began, "I recognised you from your photographs. Could I have your autograph, please? I would like to add it to those of the most famous men of our times." Gus thought that flattery would please the film star.

Meanwhile, Gerry had almost caught up with his brother. He stood a little way behind, trying to hide his laughter.

The chimpanzee stopped chewing and gave Gus a nasty glare. It was only natural he should think Gus was after the banana. With another glare, the chimp picked up a small mallet used for driving in tent pegs.

"If I didn't know better," smiled Gus, a little puzzled, "I would think you were going to give me a playful tap with that mallet, Mr. Nyle."

"Gugugugug," said the chimp, stuffing the rest of the banana into its mouth for safety, and as if to show Gus how little he knew, it gave the surprised school-boy a wallop on the head with the mallet.

"Hi!" shouted someone, and as Gus tottered rather dazed, Mr. Kenyan Nyle strode on to the scene.

Gerry decided that it was time to leave. His brother had got himself into this mess—he could get himself out of it.

"What's all this," the film star demanded of Gus.

Gus swallowed and felt his head tenderly.

"I was just asking Mr. Nyle for his autograph."

"Asking whom?" queried the man.

"M—m—Mr. Nyle," stuttered Gus, pointing to the chimp.

"Oh really?" said the actor, scowling. "And what makes you so sure that that is Mr. Nyle?"

"I've seen him in films," explained Gus, "You can't mistake the way he walks and moves. At least I can't. I'm gifted that way."

"You are, eh?" said the grim-faced Mr. Nyle, as a chuckling crowd gathered around the trio. "Listen, you clot-witted jackanape, I'm Mr. Nyle!"

Poor Gus reeled.

"You are—? Then—then who's he?" he asked pointing to the chimp.

"A chimpanzee called Claude. If this is your idea of being funny, I don't like it," said the angry actor.

The onlookers roared with laughter, but Gus backed before the furious Mr. Nyle. "I wasn't being funny. It was a mistake—the resemblance of the photographs and all that, you know. I came to collect your autograph," he ended lamely.

He held out the book, but Mr. Nyle snatched it from him and tossed it over his head into the bushes behind.

"Get out!" he roared. "There's a notice at the stile warning autograph hunters to keep out. I'll count ten and if you're not gone by then I'll set the dogs and the rest of the company after you—including the chimp," added Kenyan Nyle with a grin, for he, too, could see the funny side of it all now.

Gus took him seriously. He looked at the bushes where the valuable book lay, then at the crowd of technicians and at the two big dogs tied to a tree. Just for practice, the chimp was gently tapping itself on the head with the mallet.

"O.K.," agreed Gus." But I want that book back."

"You can come back and look for it after four o'clock when we're finished," said Mr. Nyle. "Now, one—two—three—"

Gus ran. He reached the stile to find Gerry there, but his friends gone. However, Mr. Thugden had returned.

"Ah, you're back," said Mr. Thugden with relief. "My book—you have it safe?"

Gus had to break this gently.

"Er—was it very valuable?" he asked.

"Valuable? Of course! It was insured for two hundred pounds," cried Mr. Thugden in anguish.

Gus sighed with relief.

"That's fine. Nothing to worry about, then," he beamed. "You can draw that two hundred pounds at once, because the book's a goner!"

"A goner?" Mr. Thugden reeled. "My book—my collection? My life's work—gone—? You don't understand—no money can compensate—you don't mean it's destroyed?"

Gus fidgeted with his collar.

"N-no, sir," he said. "But Mr. Nyle got ratty and threw it over his head into a bush."

There was a momentary hush.

"Oh gosh," said Gerry feebly. "Then it really has gone. Of all the lunatics."

"You will suffer for this—you—you incompetent goop," roared Mr. Thugden. "How dare you seize the book from your brother? I'll see your Headmaster—"

"Oh—please no, sir," gasped the horrified Gus, "I can get the book back at four o'clock."

Mr. Thugden trembled and tightened his grip on his walking stick.

"I warn you," he said tremulously," if you fail, I'll see you are severely punished for this outrage."

Gus folded his arms. "I shall not fail," he announced stoutly.

"I hope not," muttered Mr. Thugden as he strode off.

"You really thing you can get it back, Gus?" asked Gerry.

"Of course I'll get it back," snorted Gus. "And what's more, it will be with Mr. Nyle's autograph!"

THE UNKNOWN ATTACKER

DESPITE his confidence, Gus's face was creased with anguish, and Gerry felt a pang of sympathy for his brother.

"You didn't get hurt? You're not in pain?" he asked anxiously.

"Eh? Pain? No, I'm thinking," frowned Gus. "Unless I get an idea we're in the soup."

"Abandon all hope," misquoted Gerry mischieviously, quickly ducking to avoid a blow from his brother.

Gus sat on the stile racking his brains while Gerry, with folded arms, stood nearby frowning heavily.

What was worrying Gerry was that Gus would try again and land them both into worse trouble. He had got off lightly so far. But if brother Gus did get one of his brilliant ideas, the chances were that he would get them both expelled, and possibly sued by Mr. Thugden for two hundred pounds. Gerry shuddered at the thought.

"If only I could do something without this maniac butting in every time," groaned Gerry.

Suddenly his brother jumped up.

"Hezekiah," he cried in triumph.

"Hezze, what?" asked Gerry blankly.

"That's what the Greek poet cried when he had an idea," said Gus. "You want to read the classics my lad."

"Ha, ha, ha. You mean Eureka. It was Archimedes and he wasn't a poet, he was a scientist," chuckled Gerry.

Gus waved his hand contemptuously.

"Never mind the details," he said. "It's roughly the same thing. Anyway, I've got an idea. It's a sure way of diddling this swanking actor, Nyle, and getting the book back."

Gerry groaned.

"Now, be a sport, Gus. Don't do it and I'll let you use my air pistol," he pleaded.

Gus ignored the offer. He meant to use the air pistol anyway—when he found where it was hidden.

"I will do it," he said, "but you've got to help."

It was simple. Gerry had to go into the wood on the other side of the field from where the book had been dropped. He had to scream and yell as though he was drowning, Gus told him.

"Drowning? There's no water for miles, except the muddy pond and that's only six inches deep," protested Gerry.

Gus snorted.

"Stop making silly interruptions. I don't care whether you're drowning or a house is on fire, and you're being burnt to death. Just yell, so they will all come running."

"Hadn't I better make up my mind whether I'm being drowned, set alight or robbed?" asked Gerry in surprise.

"Better be robbed as it is in a wood," decided Gus in a masterly way. "Keep hitting a tree with your shoes. You can take them off for the purpose. It'll sound like someone being konked on the head." Gus winced as he remembered the chimp's playful wallop.

"If being konked on the head sounds like someone hitting a tree, it'll have to sound like your head. You'd better do the shouting," said Gerry, grinning.

Gus glowered.

"Don't start being funny," he said. "This is deadly serious. A lot is at stake. I can see us being expelled."

"Well, who wants to be expelled?" asked Gerry in surprise.

"I mean if it goes wrong," howled Gus.

"Well, it's bound to go wrong if it's something—owww!" yelped Gerry as Gus clumped him.

"Stop arguing," fumed Gus. "Go into the woods and start shouting for help. As soon as they all rush from the set, I'll search for the book and come away in any disguise that's handy. I saw several lying about."

Gerry said nothing. It was hopeless to argue with Gus once he had an idea firmly fixed in his head. But once before one of Gus's ideas had come off, and this might be one more. Even Gus couldn't be always wrong.

As soon as Gerry had gone, Gus stole towards the group of film people in the glade.

"Where is that chap Hudson who plays a chimp," Gus heard Nyle demand.

Gus crept nearer, and he was only a few yards from the men when there was a frantic cry—

"Help, help . . . Mercy . . . owowowow!"

Thud, bash, thud.

Gus held his breath as he saw the actors stiffen.

"Some one being attacked," said Nyle absent-mindedly. "Now what was I saying? Oh, yes, Hudson. Find Hudson someone—"

"Help, help," came the wild cries.

"Go and tell that person to shut up. How can I concentrate with all this screaming going on?" asked the actor angrily.

There was a final thud, then silence.

"Sounds grim," exclaimed one of the men. "Hadn't we better find out what's going on?"

"Yes, I suppose we should," Kenyan Nyle decided. "Where's that jungle club. Get some spears—the man may be dangerous."

Gus rubbed his hands in glee as the crowd went hurrying off towards the sounds of the "battle."

THE BOY IN THE CHIMP SKIN

GUS began his search and finally spotted the autograph book in the middle of a bush. He had to go on all fours and creep under some tangled bushes.

To the headmaster's astonishment, the "ape" politely raised its cap to him. He didn't dream that the "animal" was really Gus wearing an ape skin!

A shock awaited him on the other side.

He found himself in a small clearing—and in the middle lay a film actor apparently fast asleep. Beside him lay his costume.

Gus realised who it was—the missing Hudson, for it was an ape outfit that lay beside the actor.

This was Gus's chance to get away. He crept forward stealthily, grabbed the costume, and climbed into the ape skin fastening the concealed zipper.

"This'll fool 'em!" he chortled, crawling from beneath the bush.

No one saw him as he made his way down the path. He reached the road with ease, chuckling at his own smartness.

"All I have to do now," he chuckled," is to unzip the skin and I'm good old Gus again."

He fumbled with the zip, but he had forgotten that the skin had paws instead of fingers! He couldn't work the zipper!

"Hi—Gerry," he yelled.

But only a strangled cry came through the ape's teeth, and Gerry wasn't in sight.

In panic, Gus rubbed himself against a tree trying in vain to get at the zipper, and then to his horror, he saw a portly gentleman coming down the road on his bicycle.

It was Mr. Humphrey, his headmaster.

In his left " paw " Gus held his school cap which he had been unable to wear under the headpiece of the costume, and so that he could raise the cap respectfully to his headmaster, Gus put it on.

He was in such a panic that it did not occur to him how scared the Head might be at seeing an ape raise its cap to him.

The Head deep in thought, gave an absent-minded nod as he saw one of his boys raise his cap. Then he gave another look and fell off his bicycle with the shock.

With the best of intentions, Gus rushed towards the fallen Headmaster trying to speak. But that only made the " chimp's " teeth chatter.

Mr. Humphrey scrambled up, seizing his cycle pump which had fallen off.

" Stand back, foul monster," he cried gallantly.

Gus lumbered forward trying to say " 'S'only me, sir," but the only sound that came was " Gugugugugug ! "

Mr. Humphrey bolted without his bicycle, and almost collided with Gerry, who came into view followed by a group of men armed with clubs and spears. It was the film men.

" There he is," one shouted.

" Help," shouted Mr. Humphrey. " The monster attacked me ! Help."

The little army raced down the road.

" It's Hudson," shouted Mr. Nyle. " The boy was right. The attacker in the woods was Hudson in his chimp get-up."

To explain his wild cries when the film men had arrived, Gerry had told them that there was a wild chimp at large and it had tried to attack him. At once his " rescuers " had decided that it must have been the missing Hudson, for there had been trouble before when Hudson put on his chimp skin and scared the local people.

" This is where we teach Hudson a lesson," fumed Mr. Nyle. " He makes people think he is a jungle monster—all right, we'll treat him as one. Let him feel your spears men—that's the way to tire him of these tricks."

As he led the charge, Gerry saw the chimp wearing a school cap and he had an uneasy feeling that he knew who really was inside the skin.

When Kenyan Nyle halted the men to give instructions, Gerry ran ahead, heedless of his headmaster's warnings.

Around the bend in the road, Gus had tried to mount his bike, but the short-legged costume had prevented him.

Further down the road, however, was a lorry with its tail board down. Gus made a dash for it.

Gerry caught him up as he was climbing in.

" Gus ? " he yelped.

The chimp nodded dumbly.

The two brothers scrambled into the lorry as it started to move.

Gerry worked the zipper and Gus peered out.

" Why did you make them chase me ? " he snapped.

" Never mind that. If the Head finds out it was you who scared him you'll be expelled. Did you get the book ? "

" Book ? " echoed Gus.

" The book you went to get ? " snapped Gerry irritably.

" Gosh," gasped Gus in horror. " It's still in the glade where I found this skin. I forgot it in the excitement of trying to escape."

Gerry gritted his teeth and looked back down the road.

" They'll be coming after me soon," he said. " Give me that outfit and when the lorry stops hide somewhere."

The lorry slowed, and Gerry jumped out, flinging the skin to the front of the lorry, while Gus dodged into hiding behind a hedge.

A minute later a car came whizzing down the road. In it were Mr. Nyle and his men.

As Gerry waved, the car slowed and stopped.

Hudson was the first out of the car.

" Where's my outfit," he roared. He turned to Kenyan Nyle. " I keep telling you it wasn't me. I was stunned by this blessed book someone threw at me."

It was the autograph book. When Kenyan Nyle threw it over his head it must have hit Hudson and knocked him out.

" Mr. Nyle threw it," Gerry explained to the irate actor, " and your outfit is in that lorry."

They all yelled to the lorry driver who had just found the skin and was goggling at it.

" How did this get here ? " he demanded.

" It's part of my film company's equipment. Let me have it," said Mr. Nyle.

There was some argument, and Gerry drew the lorry driver to one side.

" Get Mr. Nyle to sign this book as a receipt for the skin," he whispered. " A bob if you can do it."

The driver took the open book.

" I got to have a receipt," he said to the actor. " Sign the book please."

Kenyan Nyle signed with a flourish, and gave the driver five shillings for his co-operation.

Gerry took the book and slipped away to join Gus at the edge of the crowd.

" Take my tip and bolt for the school as hard as you can," he advised.

" Just what I was thinking," said Gus.

He sped off, and Gerry took the precious book to Mr. Thugden. The collector was pleased to find it none the worse and gave Gerry the promised ten shillings. When he heard that Gus had done most of the work, he gave Gerry another ten shillings for his brother.

" That brother of yours must be smarter than he looks, my boy," said Mr. Thugden, smiling.

" You bet he is," said Gerry with a grin.

OPERATION FROGMAN!

BY EDWARD R. HOME-GALL

DURING THE WAR, THE GERMANS BUILT A SUBMARINE PARENT-SHIP OF A NEW AND DEADLY TYPE. ITS TASK WAS TO SERVICE A FLEET OF U-BOATS WHICH, HOPING TO SINK ALL ALLIED SHIPS, SURROUNDED THE BRITISH ISLES. THE GERMAN PARENT-SHIP WAS BASED IN A NORWEGIAN FJORD, AND SO WELL-PROTECTED WAS IT THAT THE ENEMY WERE CONVINCED THAT IT WAS SAFE FROM ATTACK. NEVERTHELESS, TWO DARING BRITISH FROGMEN, DON DREW AND NOBBY POUNDS, UNDERTOOK THE TASK OF BLOWING IT UP

DON AND NOBBY, TOGETHER WITH THEIR TWO-MAN TORPEDO, WERE TAKEN ACROSS THE NORTH SEA BY FISHING-BOAT. THEN, WHEN NEAR THE COAST OF NORWAY, THEY SET OFF ALONE ON THEIR PERILOUS MISSION

GOOD LUCK, LADS. HOPE YOU GET INTO THE FJORD WITHOUT BEING SEEN

YOU'LL DESERVE A V.C. APIECE IF YOU WRECK THAT GERMAN PARENT-SHIP!

CHEER-O, CHUMS. WE'LL DO OUR BEST

THE MOUTH OF THE FJORD WAS GUARDED BY A MINEFIELD. DON STEERED CAUTIOUSLY THROUGH IT -- THEN SUDDENLY STOPPED THE TWO-MAN TORPEDO

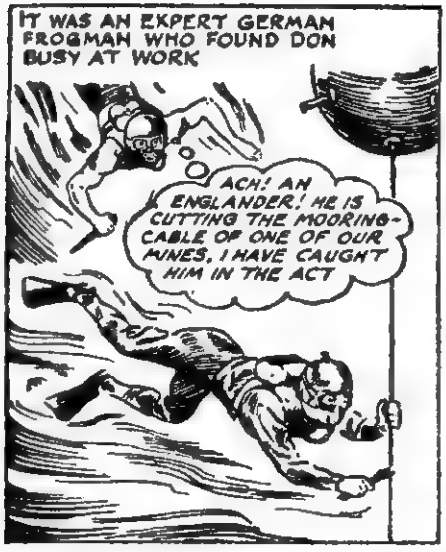
JUST AS WE EXPECTED! THERE'S AN ANTI-SUBMARINE NET BARRING THE WAY. SHALL I GET BUSY WITH MY CUTTERS?

NOT FOR A MINUTE, NOBBY. WE'LL SURFACE FIRST AND SEE IF THE COAST IS CLEAR

FARTHER UP THE FJORD WAS AN ENEMY GUNBOAT. ITS RADAR OPERATOR GAVE A GASP SOON AFTER THE TWO-MAN TORPEDO HAD SURFACED

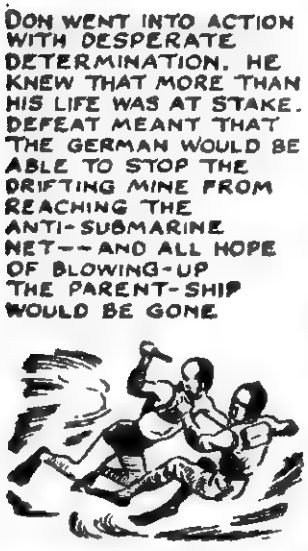
HERR CAPTAIN! AN OBJECT APPEARS TO BE MOVING NEAR THE MINEFIELD!

CAPTAIN VON KRAFEN, IN CHARGE OF THE FJORD DEFENCES, WAS A MAN WHO LEFT NOTHING TO CHANCE
RADIO ALL FJORD GUARDS TO BE ON THE ALERT! ORDER THE SUBMARINE-NET'S POWER-CIRCUIT TO BE SWITCHED ON!
DON AND NOBBY WERE SWIFTLY SPOTTED BY A GERMAN SENTRY
CARL! SOMETHING HAS JUST COME UP OUT OF THE WATER OVER THERE
HIMMEL! I CAN SEE IT TOO! GUARD! TURN OUT!
DIVING THE TORPEDO, DON BROUGHT IT UP TO THE SURFACE AGAIN AT THE SIDE OF THE FJORD
POWER-CIRCUIT SWITCHED ON, HERR CAPTAIN
GOSH, LOOK! A GUNBOAT!
AND IF WE TRY TO CUT OUR WAY THROUGH THAT NET NOW WE'LL BE ELECTROCUTED. WE'RE IN A JAM, NOBBY!
I KNOW WHAT WE'LL DO. WE'LL CUT ONE OF THOSE MINES ADRIFT AND LET IT FLOAT UP THE FJORD WITH THE TIDE. IT'LL BLOW A HOLE CLEAN THROUGH THE NET WHEN IT MAKES CONTACT!
ARMED WITH A PAIR OF CUTTERS, DON SWAM BACK TO THE MINEFIELD
MEANWHILE, ON THE GUNBOAT, CAPT. VON KRAFEN WAS SENDING OFF AN UNDERWATER SEARCH PARTY
IF ANY ENGLANDERS ARE OPERATING IN THE FJORD WE SHALL SOON LOCATE THEM


IT WAS AN EXPERT GERMAN FROGMAN WHO FOUND DON BUSY AT WORK
ACH! AN ENGLANDER! HE IS CUTTING THE MOORING-CABLE OF ONE OF OUR MINES. I HAVE CAUGHT HIM IN THE ACT

STILL UNSUSPICIOUS, DON COMPLETED HIS JOB

THE NEXT MOMENT--
BY JIMINY-- IT'S A FRITZ!

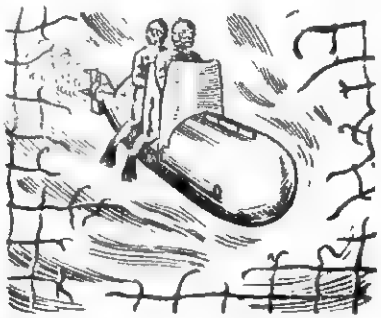

DON WENT INTO ACTION WITH DESPERATE DETERMINATION. HE KNEW THAT MORE THAN HIS LIFE WAS AT STAKE. DEFEAT MEANT THAT THE GERMAN WOULD BE ABLE TO STOP THE DRIFTING MINE FROM REACHING THE ANTI-SUBMARINE NET--AND ALL HOPE OF BLOWING-UP THE PARENT-SHIP WOULD BE GONE

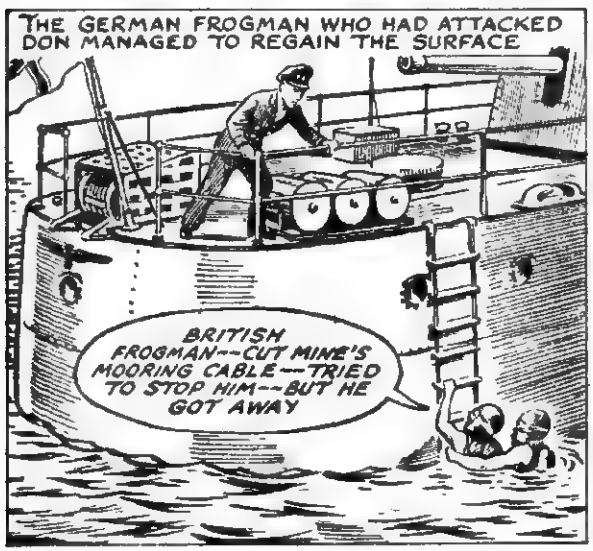
THE GERMAN'S DAGGER PARTLY RIPPED THROUGH DON'S OXYGEN-PIPE. BUT DON GRIPPED THE OTHER'S BREATHING-TUBE AND PULLED WITH ALL HIS MIGHT
U-URGH! GUH--GUH!
THAT'S GOT YOU! YOU CAN'T FIGHT WITHOUT AIR!

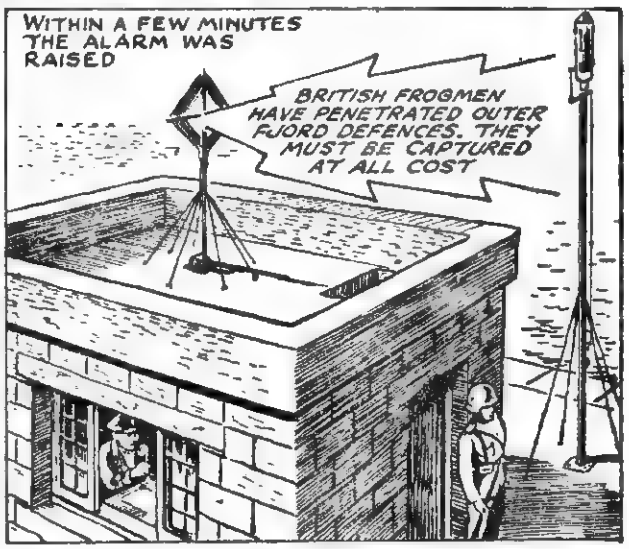
WITH ONE HAND CLASPED AROUND HIS PUNCTURED OXYGEN-PIPE, DON STRUCK OUT FOR THE SURFACE
I THINK I CAN JUST MAKE IT-- BUT IT'LL BE--A CLOSE THING!

DON REJOINED NOBBY JUST AS A SEARCHLIGHT BEAM SWEPT THE WATER
SEE, HERR CAPTAIN? THAT IS WHAT OUR RADAR PICKED UP--A MINE THAT HAS BROKEN ADRIFT
ACH! IT WILL BLOW A HOLE IN THE ANTI-SUBMARINE NET! QUICK-TRY TO DESTROY IT WITH RIFLE-FIRE!

DON AND NOBBY WAITED ONLY LONG ENOUGH TO REPAIR DON'S PUNCTURED OXYGEN-PIPE. THEN THEY GOT ON TO THEIR TWO-MAN TORPEDO AND WENT DIVING THROUGH THE HOLE BLASTED IN THE NET BY THE MINE




THE GERMAN FROGMAN WHO HAD ATTACKED DON MANAGED TO REGAIN THE SURFACE
BRITISH FROGMAN--CUT MINE'S MOORING CABLE--TRIED TO STOP HIM--BUT HE GOT AWAY


WITHIN A FEW MINUTES THE ALARM WAS RAISED
BRITISH FROGMEN HAVE PENETRATED OUTER FJORD DEFENCES. THEY MUST BE CAPTURED AT ALL COST

THANKS TO BEING ABLE TO TRAVEL UNDER-WATER, DON AND NOBBY THWARTED THE GERMAN DEFENDERS AND AT LAST REACHED THE SPOT WHERE THEY EXPECTED THE PARENT-SHIP TO BE MOORED. THEN THEY GOT A SHOCK
THE SHIP'S VANISHED!
WELL, I'M HANGED! YET IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE HERE--ACCORDING TO OUR MAP

DON THEN NOTICED SOMETHING THAT GAVE HIM FRESH HOPE
P'RAPS THE SHIP HAS BEEN TOWED TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THOSE LOCK-GATES. LET'S GO AND HAVE A LOOK

ALL AT ONCE THE PALS FOUND THEMSELVES LIT UP IN THE BRILLIANT BEAM OF A SEARCHLIGHT

IT'S THE GERMAN GUNBOAT, DON!

WE'LL HAVE TO CRASH-DIVE!

ABOARD THE GUNBOAT VON KRAFEN RAPPED OUT ORDERS

THERE ARE THE ENGLANDERS! OPEN FIRE--QUICK! DON'T GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO DIVE

GRIMLY DON DROVE THE TORPEDO DOWNWARDS

AND THEN—

WE'RE HIT!

A SHELL-SPLINTER HAS PIERCED THE FOR'ARD TRIMMING TANK

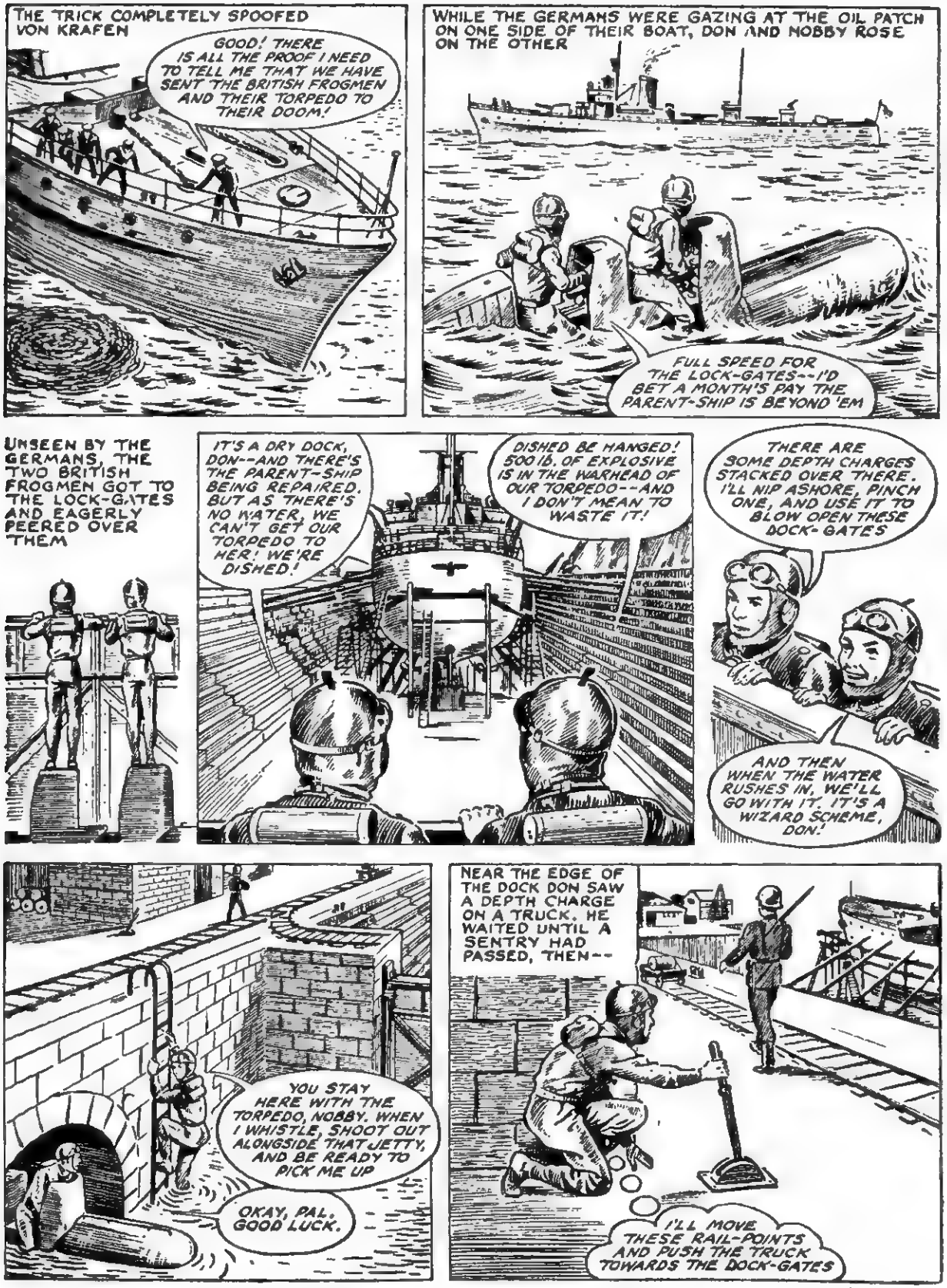
BY SKILFUL USE OF THE CONTROLS, DON BROUGHT THE TORPEDO TO REST ON THE BOTTOM. BUT HE KNEW THAT IT WOULD NOW BE POSSIBLE TO REMAIN SUBMERGED ONLY FOR A FEW MINUTES AT A TIME

VON KRAFEN EAGERLY WATCHED THE PLACE WHERE THE PALS HAD SUBMERGED

THOSE BUBBLES PROVE THAT WE WINGED THEIR TORPEDO. BE READY TO OPEN FIRE AS SOON AS THEY RETURN TO THE SURFACE

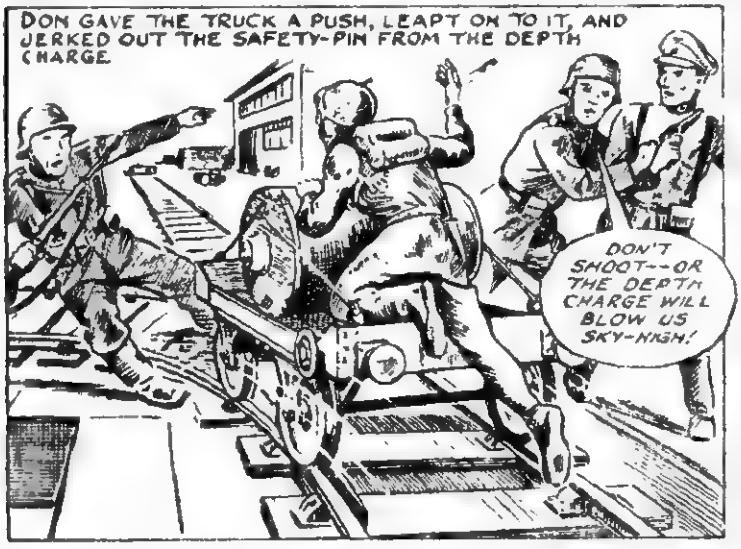
DON AND NOBBY, HOWEVER, HAD HIT ON A WHEEZE TO FOOL THEIR PURSUERS

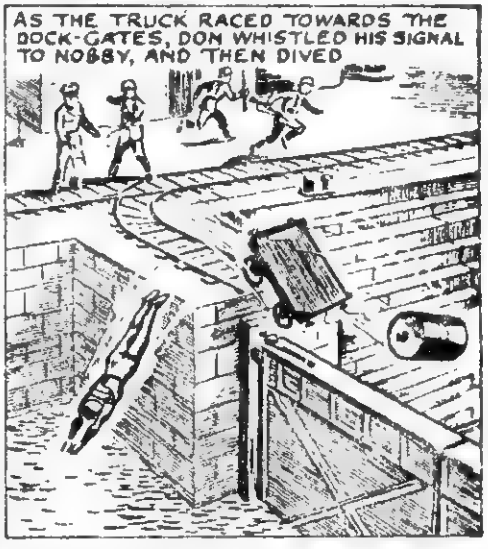
I'LL LET SOME OIL OUT, AND WHEN THE GERMANS SEE IT FLOATING ALL ROUND THOSE ODDS AND ENDS THEY'LL THINK WE'VE HAD IT!

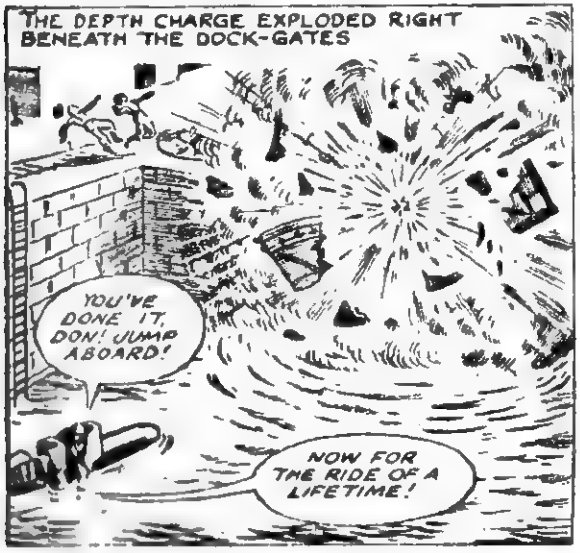

THE TRICK COMPLETELY SPOOFED VON KRAFEN
GOOD! THERE IS ALL THE PROOF I NEED TO TELL ME THAT WE HAVE SENT THE BRITISH FROGMEN AND THEIR TORPEDO TO THEIR DOOM!
WHILE THE GERMANS WERE GAZING AT THE OIL PATCH ON ONE SIDE OF THEIR BOAT, DON AND NOBBY ROSE ON THE OTHER
FULL SPEED FOR THE LOCK-GATES--I'D BET A MONTH'S PAY THE PARENT-SHIP IS BEYOND 'EM
UNSEEN BY THE GERMANS, THE TWO BRITISH FROGMEN GOT TO THE LOCK-GATES AND EAGERLY PEERED OVER THEM
IT'S A DRY DOCK, DON--AND THERE'S THE PARENT-SHIP BEING REPAIRED. BUT AS THERE'S NO WATER, WE CAN'T GET OUR TORPEDO TO HER! WE'RE DISHED!
DISHED BE HANGED! 500 LB. OF EXPLOSIVE IS IN THE WARHEAD OF OUR TORPEDO--AND I DON'T MEAN TO WASTE IT!
THERE ARE SOME DEPTH CHARGES STACKED OVER THERE. I'LL NIP ASHORE, PINCH ONE, AND USE IT TO BLOW OPEN THESE DOCK-GATES
AND THEN WHEN THE WATER RUSHES IN, WE'LL GO WITH IT. IT'S A WIZARD SCHEME, DON!
YOU STAY HERE WITH THE TORPEDO, NOBBY. WHEN I WHISTLE, SHOOT OUT ALONGSIDE THAT JETTY, AND BE READY TO PICK ME UP
OKAY, PAL. GOOD LUCK.
NEAR THE EDGE OF THE DOCK DON SAW A DEPTH CHARGE ON A TRUCK. HE WAITED UNTIL A SENTRY HAD PASSED, THEN--
I'LL MOVE THESE RAIL-POINTS AND PUSH THE TRUCK TOWARDS THE DOCK-GATES

THE SENTRY, HOWEVER, HEARD THE FAINT CLICK OF THE POINTS. DON DARTED INTO COVER, AND, AS THE SENTRY CAME TO INVESTIGATE --
ACH! HELP! GUARD, TURN OUT!

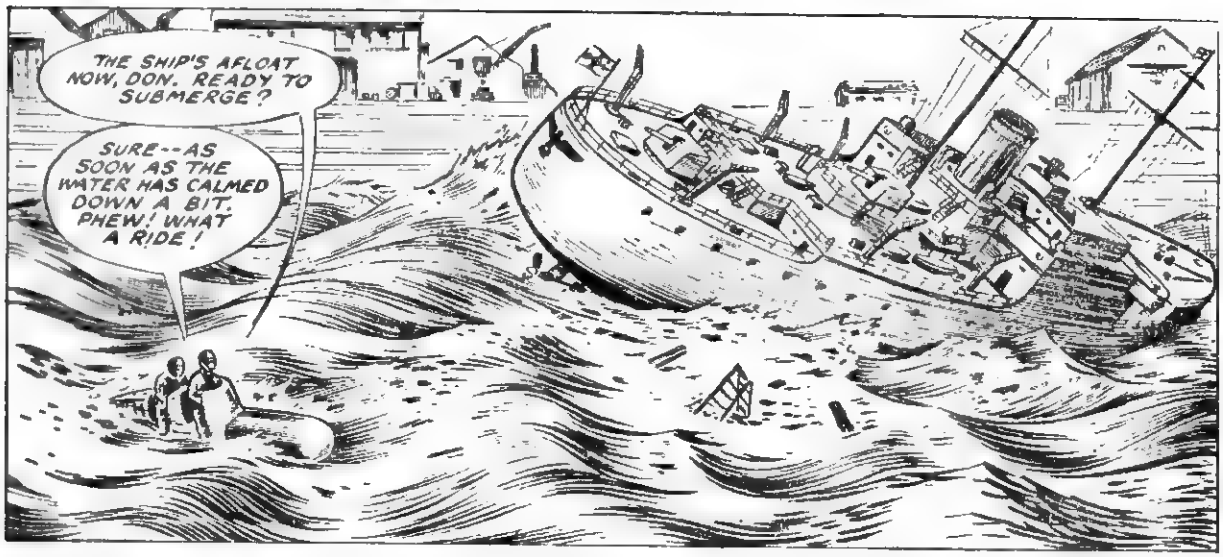
DON KNOCKED THE SENTRY FLYING, BUT THE GERMAN'S SHOUTS HAD ALREADY BEEN HEARD
NIMMEL, IT IS ONE OF THE BRITISH FROGMEN!

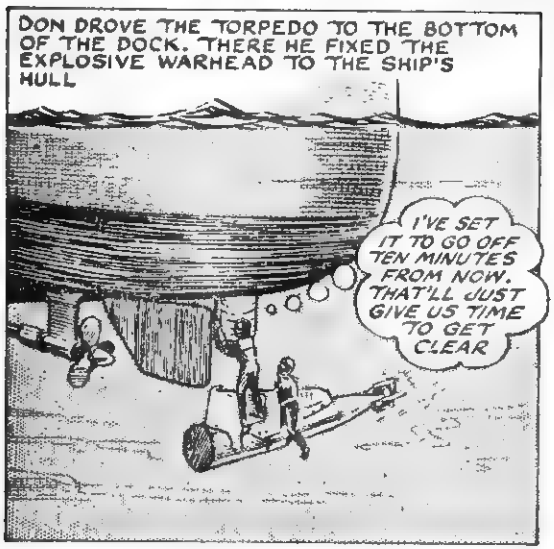

DON GAVE THE TRUCK A PUSH, LEAPT ON TO IT, AND JERKED OUT THE SAFETY-PIN FROM THE DEPTH CHARGE
DON'T SHOOT -- OR THE DEPTH CHARGE WILL BLOW US SKY-HIGH!


AS THE TRUCK RACED TOWARDS THE DOCK-GATES, DON WHISTLED HIS SIGNAL TO NOBBY, AND THEN DIVED

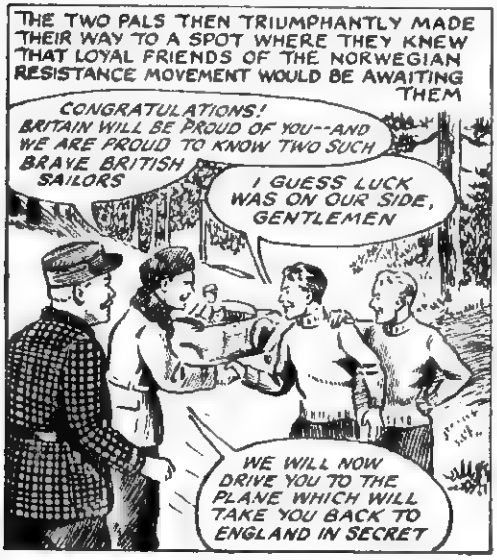

THE DEPTH CHARGE EXPLODED RIGHT BENEATH THE DOCK-GATES
YOU'VE DONE IT, DON! JUMP ABOARD!
NOW FOR THE RIDE OF A LIFETIME!

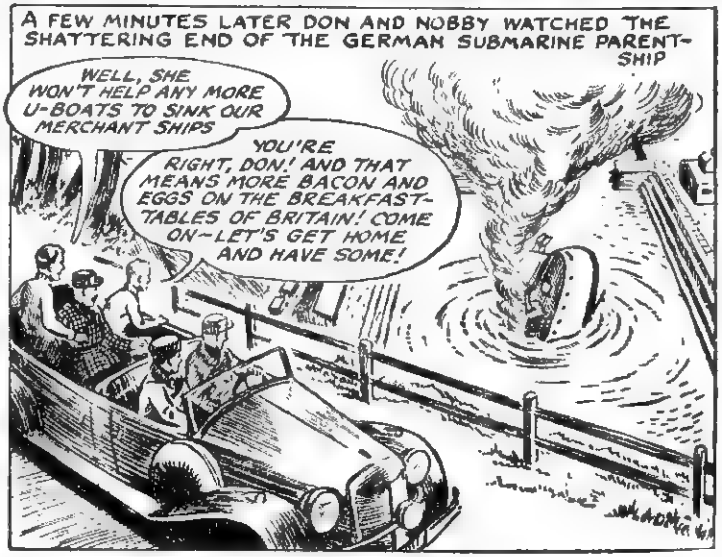
LIKE A RAGING TIDAL WAVE THE WATER RUSHED INTO THE DOCK -- TAKING THE FROGMAN PALS WITH IT
HANG ON TIGHT, NOBBY!


THE SHIP'S AFLOAT NOW, DON. READY TO SUBMERGE?
SURE--AS SOON AS THE WATER HAS CALMED DOWN A BIT. PHEW! WHAT A RIDE!


DON DROVE THE TORPEDO TO THE BOTTOM OF THE DOCK. THERE HE FIXED THE EXPLOSIVE WARHEAD TO THE SHIP'S HULL
I'VE SET IT TO GO OFF TEN MINUTES FROM NOW. THAT'LL JUST GIVE US TIME TO GET CLEAR

THEIR JOB DONE, DON AND NOBBY STOLE ASHORE, LOADED THEIR FROGMAN APPARATUS ON TO THE TORPEDO, AND SENT IT ACROSS THE DOCK
WHEN THE SHIP GOES UP THE TORPEDO WILL BE BLOWN SKY-HIGH WITH IT
THAT'LL KEEP IT OUT OF GERMAN HANDS!


THE TWO PALS THEN TRIUMPHANTLY MADE THEIR WAY TO A SPOT WHERE THEY KNEW THAT LOYAL FRIENDS OF THE NORWEGIAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT WOULD BE AWAITING THEM
CONGRATULATIONS! BRITAIN WILL BE PROUD OF YOU--AND WE ARE PROUD TO KNOW TWO SUCH BRAVE BRITISH SAILORS
I GUESS LUCK WAS ON OUR SIDE, GENTLEMEN
WE WILL NOW DRIVE YOU TO THE PLANE WHICH WILL TAKE YOU BACK TO ENGLAND IN SECRET


A FEW MINUTES LATER DON AND NOBBY WATCHED THE SHATTERING END OF THE GERMAN SUBMARINE PARENT-SHIP
WELL, SHE WON'T HELP ANY MORE U-BOATS TO SINK OUR MERCHANT SHIPS
YOU'RE RIGHT, DON! AND THAT MEANS MORE BACON AND EGGS ON THE BREAKFAST-TABLES OF BRITAIN! COME ON--LET'S GET HOME AND HAVE SOME!

WIZ AND LOFTY V MOTOR-CYCLE BANDITS

THE GOLD CUP STOLEN

By Victor Norman

"LET'S head for home!" Lofty Duff insisted to his pal and partner, Wiz Hardy. "You've just won a European motor-cycle Grand Prix. Now is the time for a rest. We'll fly peacefully back to England in the helicopter."

Wiz Hardy, always on the look-out for thrills and excitement, shook his head. He was the active partner of the firm of Hardy & Duff, Speed Specialists. Wiz raced aeroplanes, motor-cars and motor-bikes; his pal, Lofty, attended to the business side.

Wiz, as he and Lofty sat at a cafe table in the old market square of Goraffa, looked at a colourful notice on the white wall opposite. It showed a swarthy, moustached face with bright, dark eyes. On the head was a jaunty red beret, on the ears were gold rings, and an automatic pistol was held threateningly pointing out of the poster—at Wiz, Lofty, or anyone else who happened to be staring at it.

"One thousand pounds reward," mused Wiz. "Just for capturing that chap on the poster—Sapetta, the Bandit Chief."

"Let the local cops capture him—it's none of our business," said Lofty. "Just let's go home."

"A thousand pounds!" mused Wiz again, thinking aloud. "I could fly the helicopter over the mountains, out of rifle range, and spot his hide-out. I could put it down in places where the police can't go—"

"And be captured by the bandit," scoffed Lofty. "Talk sense. If you did get there, and if you did find his hide-out—how would you capture Sapetta alone?"

"Alone, old boy? I'd have you with me," said Wiz with a grin. "Between us we could get him somehow—especially if we took a cop along."

He looked up then as four motor-cycles came along the street, ridden by crash-helmeted Goraffans. All four bikes halted. The leading rider dismounted, and made a courteous bow to the pals. He was lean-faced and clean-shaven, and had a grave, dignified manner.

"Englishmen," he said with soft foreign accent, "you are the brave and daring riders who win gold cup in the motor race?"

"That's so," said Lofty with a nod, and indicated Wiz. "My friend here, Wiz Hardy, won the race—"

The foreigner beamed, and held out his hand.

It Meant £1,000 to the Speed-Pals if They Could Get Their Man!

" Hoorah. Well done," he said. " I watch the race. It was wonderful. I, too, ride motor-cycles. Could I but touch the gold cup for luck? "

Lofty laughed.

" Sure," he said.

For safety, he had it in a suitcase under the table. And for still more safety he beckoned over an armed policeman who stood not far away.

" Ah! You think I would steal it? " asked the motor-cyclist, stiffening.

" Not really. But I always play for safety," smiled Lofty. " I'm the cautious type."

The motor-cyclist bowed again. Lofty signalled the policeman nearer, opened the suitcase and displayed the gold cup.

As he held it out, things happened quickly!

One of the motor-cyclists leapt from his machine and K.O'd the policeman with a punch to the jaw. The gold cup was snatched from the amazed Lofty's hands by the man who had asked to see it.

Before Wiz could take a hand, the men were back on their motor-cycles and speeding away down the dusty street!

They had pulled squares of black paper from the front of their crash-hats, revealing the skull and crossbones emblem!

" Sapetta, the bandit chief, thanks you! " yelled the motor-cyclist clasping the gold cup.

Wiz scrambled over the table. At the kerb a few yards away was a motor-cycle belonging to the local postman. Without waiting to explain, Wiz kick-started it, leapt into the saddle and set off in pursuit of the motor-cycling bandits!

Wiz took a bend flat out in a slithering two-wheel slide, and went rocketting down a steep hill out of the village.

Ahead of him the bandits had a good lead.

Wiz saw them swing left and head for a bridge spanning a wide river.

By the time the Speed Specialist reached the bridge, the bandits had crossed it. The toll-keeper lay on the ground, dazedly rubbing his head. The gate was open.

Not only was the gate open, but the bridge was open, too.

It was a bridge that parted company in the middle. The two halves being wound up to let ships pass beneath. And, as he hurtled towards it, Wiz saw that the halves were rising.

The gap in the middle was widening; the bridge-halves became perilously steep. Wiz had to stop and admit defeat, or risk everything in an attempt to cross the bridge.

Wiz opened the throttle wide. Those bandits weren't going to get clean away with the gold cup he'd won. The bike zoomed up the steep bridge half, reached the end, and shot into space.

The river seemed miles below. For a terrible moment Wiz thought that his bike wasn't going to make the jump. But with a fraction to spare, the front wheel touched down on the other canting bridge half.

In a spectacular speed-wobble, the bike shot downwards—to hit the roadway with such force that the front tyre burst!

Wiz fought the bucking speed iron as it careered along. Suddenly he saw that a gate had been flung across the road. In front of it, rifle levelled at him, stood a policeman.

The bike skidded to a standstill, just as a car with screaming siren came over the bridge, which had been hurriedly lowered.

There were two armed policemen in the car, and a man in plain clothes. Out they jumped, and Wiz was surrounded, well covered with rifles and automatic pistols.

" I'm English," said Wiz. " Anyone spikka da Engleesh? "

The man in plain clothes, burly, and grim-faced, strode up to him.

" I speak English. Who are you? Are you a member of the motor-cycle bandit gang that have just passed this way? "

Wiz explained about the theft of the gold cup, and then showed his papers, while the police and a small crowd gathered round.

The man in plain clothes looked through the papers, and then smiled.

" Ah! Wiz Hardy, eh? I saw you win the motor-cycle race. It was magnificent. Also I saw you leap the bridge gap! That was very daring."

Wiz pointed ahead down the road.

" Maybe, but how about that bandit Sapetta? Are you going to let him get away with my gold cup? "

" No. It shall be recaptured. I am Captain Zorena of the police," the man returned, as he handed Wiz back his papers. " You will get the cup back, eventually— "

" Eventually? But we are leaving for England to-day. The helicopter is ready at the airfield," said Wiz impatiently. " I can't hang about waiting for Sapetta to be captured. Why not go after him? Let me have another motor-bike, or better still— "

Wiz broke off as a startling idea came to him.

" Hey! The helicopter. That gives me an idea. Come along with me and bring two armed men. How far off is the bandits' hideout? "

" In the mountain. Twenty miles away, but— "

" Tricky winding roads? " asked Wiz eagerly.

" Yes, yes, but if we try to follow on motor-cycles, they can ambush us, and shoot us off the mountain."

" We'll be safe if we go by helicopter," burst out Wiz. " We can watch them, and see where they go. When we find their headquarters, we'll raid it. Come on; what are we waiting for? You're not afraid of Sapetta? "

The Captain drew up, his eyes flashing with indignation.

" Sapetta is my enemy. I have sworn to capture him, but— "

" But what? No excuses now. Give me a lift in your car to the airfield," urged Wiz.

The Captain thought swiftly, consulted one of the

armed policemen, and then turned back to Wiz, eager and excited by this grand idea.

"It shall be," he said. "We will shock those bandits, heh!"

For the moment Wiz had forgotten Lofty. Turning round he saw his pal leaning from a taxi-cab window. Suddenly he realised that Lofty would have something to say about Wiz pursuing the bandits in the helicopter—and he guessed what it would be: No!

Lofty was not the kind of chap to delight in hunting dangerous bandits by means of helicopter, or landing near their lair, even to get back a gold cup. As Wiz's business partner, he had the power to forbid him to risk his neck in any exploit!

LOFTY KIDNAPPED

"CAPTAIN," said Wiz suddenly, "there's one snag. My partner may not agree. To save arguments, will you commandeer the helicopter and me to fly it? Give me no chance to refuse—or rather, my partner?"

The Captain hesitated; it wanted thinking about. But while he thought, Lofty arrived, jumping from the taxi, in a state of wild excitement.

"You looney, Wiz. That bandit's dangerous. He might have killed you. Leave it to the police. It's their job to get the cup back."

Wiz winked at the Captain and then pulled a face.

"Lofty, we've been commandeered in the name of law and order," he said. "We've got to fly the police after the bandits!"

"GOT to?" said Lofty startled. "Huh! I'll see the British Consul about that. If you think— Where are you going?" he ended as Wiz hurried to the Captain's car.

"After the bandit," said Wiz. "We're in a foreign country, and orders are orders, Lofty. We're off to the airfield!"

The car engine roared. Wiz packed in alongside the Captain, and with Lofty dancing in fury, off they went. A moment later, Lofty returned to his taxi.

"Follow them!" he shouted. "Wiz shan't fly that helicopter. I'll see to that!"

At the airfield, the helicopter was all set for the journey, so all Wiz had to do was to tumble into it. He decided to take Captain Zorena, and two policemen.

The plan was to spy on the bandits from the air, and then at a suitable point ahead of them block the road, and ambush them. It sounded simple enough, and the two policemen carried automatic weapons.

But Wiz knew that Lofty would try to prevent the take-off. When he saw his pal steaming across the airfield in the taxi-cab, he bobbed down out of sight and asked the Captain to let Lofty think he wasn't on board.

Lofty arrived; he saw that the pilot's seat was vacant, and everyone pointed to the airfield buildings, which seemed to imply that Wiz was there.

"Good enough. I'm coming aboard," said Lofty grimly, "and make sure there's no take off."

When he was climbing in, the engine roared. The helicopter whirred skyward, and Lofty was dragged into the cabin.

"Good old Lofty, you made it," said Wiz cheerfully. "Cling on. Now for the bandits."

Lofty fumed and argued, but the two policemen prevented him from annoying Wiz. Whether Lofty liked it or not, the chase was on!

Ahead of them were mountains, and rough country. The winding zig-zag treacherous road that led up to it was barely more than single track with a surface that prevented high speed motor-cycling.

All the same, Wiz longed for a chance to use his motor-bike on it. His bike was stacked in the cargo compartment of the helicopter, and could at a moment's notice be brought into action—but he kept that idea to himself.

For ten minutes they flew on, and then the Captain gave a shout.

"There they are!"

On the zig-zag road far below they saw a group of motor-cyclists. Wiz gave a yell when he recognised them.

"Sapetta and the gold cup," he said. "You know these parts, Captain, pick the likeliest spot for our ambush. Any idea where Sapetta's lair is?"

"Somewhere ahead, but we have never found it," the Captain shrugged.

Wiz flew the helicopter over the four motor-cyclists, whose faces showed momentarily as they looked up. But they were not to know that the flyer was Wiz, or that he had police aboard. They rode on unsuspecting.

"We'll land beyond that rise where the road swings round a hairpin. They won't see us go down," said Wiz.

Wiz chose a level stretch, and landed the helicopter. The policemen scrambled out, and began rolling boulders across the road. Despite Lofty's warning, Wiz got out too, to help make the road block.

It was a first-class trap; and to make sure that the bandits would not be suspicious, Wiz took off again in the helicopter. Captain Zorena and his men were left in ambush.

"Now fly back to the airfield," advised Lofty.

"And leave the police stranded here? Not likely. We may have to carry back some wounded! And think of the gold cup," said Wiz.

Wiz gained height and looked down, expecting to see the motor-cycle bandits running into the trap. To his amazement, they were not to be seen. He flew over the road. It was absolutely clear except for one lone rider. He had a damaged bike, and was resting it against rocks making a repair.

"He must have had a spill," said Wiz. "That's why he's alone. The others have disappeared. Gosh—you see what this means, Lofty? Their hide-out must be somewhere along here."

"Then they'll never run into the ambush!" gasped Lofty.

"Right," snapped Wiz. "There's only one thing to do—bring back the police to this chap."

He flew off, and once again landed the helicopter near the ambush. In a few words he told what had happened, and the Captain ordered his men back into the machine.

The lone rider, stranded, had looked up at the helicopter with interest. He stood staring as it landed somewhere on the road behind him. Frantically he grabbed his damaged bike and began to push it away from where the helicopter had touched down.

But Wiz, having landed one armed policeman behind the rider, now flew over him again, and landed another round the next bend.

Lofty began to look hopeful.

"If that rider has the gold cup, we can take it and leave," he announced.

Wiz just smiled.

At high speed Wiz cut in front of the motor-cycle bandit, forcing him to swerve off the narrow track and into the lake. But the daring speed-specialist still had to catch up with the gang's hard-riding leader!

"But if we can get him to tell us or give away where the bandits' hide-out is," he chuckled, "we can capture them and qualify for the big prize—one thousand pounds reward! You stay here and guard the helicopter; I'll go and help this cop."

Wiz hurried off, and Lofty, fuming, was left behind.

Wiz heard shots as he hurried down the road, and was in time to see the lone bandit riding downhill towards him on the damaged machine. The policeman near Wiz had opened fire; the rider, wounded in the leg, came off.

Wiz joined the police as they captured the bandit.

"He's surprised by the helicopter," said the Captain grimly. "But he says we can never find the tunnel that leads to Sapetta's secret hide-out."

They questioned the sullen bandit as they dressed his slight wound. But he refused to speak. Yet he said enough to prove that there was a tunnel opening not far ahead through which the other riders had disappeared.

"The wheel marks of the bandit's bikes may give the tunnel away," said Wiz briskly.

He hurried up the road following the tyre marks. He came abreast of the helicopter. Lofty could not be seen in it so Wiz gave him a shout. There was no reply.

"Hey—where's Lofty?" exclaimed Wiz, frowning.

He looked and called in vain. Then in the dust, near the helicopter, he saw a flurry of footprints that told their own story.

Lofty had been captured. While the police and Wiz were out of sight, the bandits had come from their tunnel and carried away Wiz's partner!

WIZ TURNS BANDIT

"HERE'S a note," snapped the Captain suddenly, as he opened the helicopter door. "It's from Sapetta. He says he has kidnapped your comrade. One thousand pounds ransom and he shall be returned safe."

The Captain looked at Wiz, a worried expression on his swarthy face.

"They have Lofty, and will show him no mercy if we try to round them up," he shrugged. "You will have to pay, I'm afraid."

Wiz's eyes glittered, and he clenched his hands.

"That's the last thing I'll do," he said fiercely. "That tunnel can't be far away. We must find it."

For twenty minutes Wiz and the police searched for the tunnel; then, guided by a footprint and Lofty's handkerchief, Wiz triumphed. He gave a warning yell that brought the police, and pointed to a huge rock against the cliff wall.

"Here we are. This rock must move," he gasped, and then pointed to the earth in front of it. "The earth has been brushed over with a small branch used as a broom to remove footprints."

They heaved at the rock, sweating and straining until it swung sideways, revealing a dark cavern, a natural tunnel in the rocks.

The secret of how the bandits, so often pursued, vanished from sight was learned at last. But—what now?

Wiz did not hesitate.

"I'm going in there disguised as the bandit we've captured," he announced. "Lofty's got to be rescued."

The police leader looked horrified.

"But you alone cannot hope to bring to justice such a large gang," he gasped. "They will kill you and your friend."

Wiz, however, hadn't stayed to listen to the Captain's words. The Speed Specialist had taken his own motor-cycle from the helicopter, and was now dressing himself in the captured bandit's riding equipment.

As he jammed on his head the bandit's crash-helmet, decorated with the skull and crossbones, Wiz winked reassuringly at the Captain.

"Don't worry about me—save your sympathy for those bandits," he exclaimed. "They're going to be mighty sorry that they pinched my gold cup and kidnapped my pal."

Taking an automatic fitted with a silencer from the Captain, Wiz swung astride his speed-iron. A jab at the kickstarter, and the engine fired. Like a rocket the bike sped into the tunnel, small rocks and stones spraying from its spinning back wheel.

Wiz had travelled barely fifty yards along the tunnel when he glimpsed a circle of light ahead—the end of the tunnel. Wiz roared out into the open air once again, and found himself on a narrow, winding mountain path. In the distance three motor-cycles were parked at the path-side. Riders alongside them waved to Wiz, then remounted their machines and rode on.

They were the bandits!

Wiz smiled grimly to himself. They'd waited for the bandit who had damaged his machine. They little suspected that he was now in the hands of the police, and that the rider they'd waved to was Wiz!

Wiz set off after the bandits who rode in single file, obviously heading for their hide-out.

Wiz's problem was the action he should take when he caught up with them. He hadn't seen Lofty yet, but his pal must be with the bandits.

Suddenly, as he closed up on the rearmost motor-cycle, he saw his pal on the pillion seat.

"Poor old Lofty," he sighed.

Wiz put on speed, and was soon within thirty yards of that last motor-bike. The road was tricky, for far below on the left was a deep mountain lake.

Wiz caught up with the rear bike, and Lofty looked round. His eyes goggled as he recognised Wiz who gave him the "keep quiet" signal.

Levelling the automatic with his left hand, Wiz drew alongside the other rider, and from close range put a bullet through the bottom of his petrol tank.

The startled rider braked hard!

"Off, Lofty," Wiz yelled.

Lofty dismounted, tottering as the bandit stopped, and stared goggle-eyed at Wiz, amazed to see a strange face under that bandit crash-helmet.

It was a time for action—and Wiz acted. He changed his automatic to his right hand, and then with his left gave the rider a hefty push.

Yelling, the rider toppled off the path. Head over heels he rolled into the lake, his bike following him down.

Then Wiz roared off on his bike. The path followed the lakeside for at least a mile, and the two riders were going slowly, unaware of what had happened to the tail-end rider. More than once they looked round in surprise at sight of Wiz coming up so fast.

There was very little room for passing, but Wiz meant to pass. He came alongside the next rider, and shouldered him hard.

With a yell, the bandit veered off the path—and crashed into the lake.

Sapetta was the remaining bandit. He was far in the lead, and though Wiz rode hard, he reached the bandits' encampment, a large clearing with a few huts, well in the lead.

Wiz braked; he was running into danger. In that clearing was a score or more men with horses and motor-bikes.

Sapetta was surrounded by bandits admiring the stolen gold cup. Wiz realised that he must work fast to regain it.

Head down, he rode on. Then he gave a yell, and pointed back towards the lake. At the same moment a look-out man came running down from the rocks, yelling.

Bandits scrambled on to rocks and stared down at their companions swimming in the lake.

Sapetta, holding the gold cup, wheeled his bike away from the men. Wiz saw his chance.

Riding up alongside him, Wiz seized the gold cup, and pulled the automatic from the bandit chief's holster.

His bike then shot away with a screech of tyres. Sapetta, unarmed, gave chase along the narrow, rock-strewn path which led away from the stronghold.

The tables were turned. Wiz rode on the side nearest the lake. The bandit roaring with rage, attempted to get on the inside of Wiz and shoulder him into the water.

But Sapetta's bike was no match for Wiz's. Wiz kept his rear wheel level with Sapetta's front, and the faster the bandit went the faster Wiz went, not letting him get to shoulder level.

Wiz suddenly swung his bike across the bandit chief's course, forcing Sapetta to brake violently.

The daring Speed-Specialist braked too!

The bandit's front wheel collided with Wiz's rear mudguard. The bandit was hurled clean over the handlebars.

Wiz looked back, and saw Sapetta cartwheeling into the lake, to join his two other swimming men. Wiz sped on into the tunnel, picked up Lofty, then rejoined Captain Zorena and his police.

"Roll the boulder over the tunnel entrance and stand guard," Wiz instructed the Captain. "That'll bottle up the bandits. Now, where's my helicopter. I'm going fishing—for crooks."

Wiz and Lofty clambered into the helicopter. Ten minutes later, they were soaring over the lake in which Sapetta and two of his men were still floundering.

Lofty lowered a rope ladder and covered Sapetta and his two bandits with a revolver as they climbed up into the cabin. The rest of the bandit gang, standing on the lake side, could only look on helplessly at the capture of their leader.

The helicopter returned to where the Police Captain was waiting. Wiz, beaming, handed over Sapetta and his two men.

"Here you are, Captain—two bandits and one bandit chief," he chuckled.

Sapetta glared at Wiz in fury.

"You—you English busybody," he snarled.

Captain Zorena shook Wiz warmly by the hand.

"You have well earned the thousand pounds reward, my friend," he cried. "And now that Sapetta is in our hands, the rest of his gang will be easy to capture."

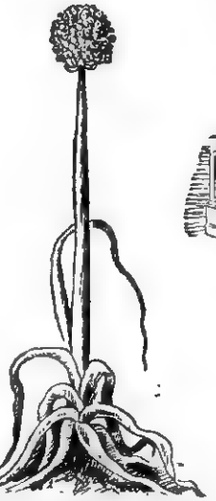
Lofty, now smiling broadly, patted Wiz proudly on the back. At last the two Speed Specialists could head for home—and with one gold cup and one thousand pounds to the good!

WORLD-WIDE QUIZ

Have a Shot at the Answers—Then Check Them with the Correct Ones on Page 92

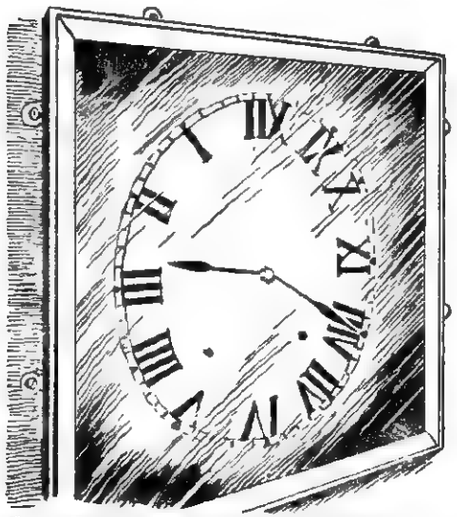
1. WHAT ARE THE POSTS FOR?

2. WHAT FESTIVAL ARE THESE CHINESE CELEBRATING?



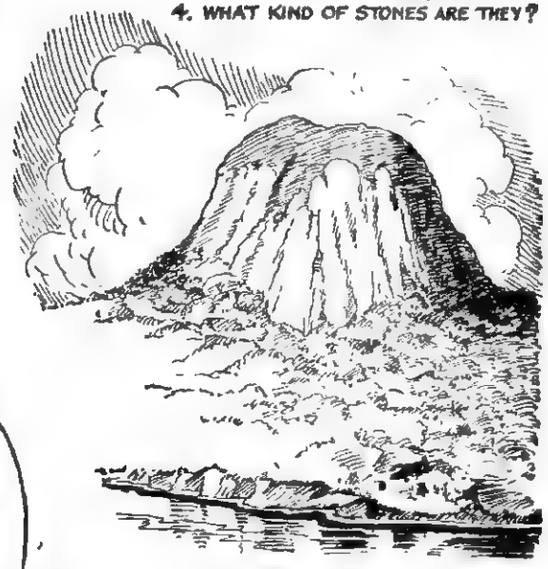
3. SEEN IN VEGETABLE GARDENS. WHAT IS IT?

4. WHAT KIND OF STONES ARE THEY?



5. A CLOCK FACE AS SEEN THROUGH A MIRROR. WHAT'S THE TIME?

6. WHAT IS THIS PART OF A RIFLE CALLED?



7. IF IT'S IN SOUTH AFRICA, IS IT A KARROO, A KRAAL, OR A KOP?

8. WHAT NAME IS GIVEN TO WAVES LIKE THESE?

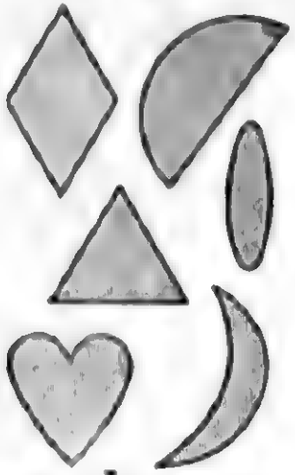
9. WHAT HAS HE FORGOTTEN?

10. WHAT TYPE OF HAT IS HE WEARING?

11. DOES HE WRITE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT OR RIGHT TO LEFT?

12. IS "A" OR "B" A COS LETTUCE?

13. WHICH IS THE AFRICAN?



14. ONE OF THESE SHAPES HAS THE SAME NAME AS A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT. WHICH IS IT?

15. WHAT GAME ARE THEY PLAYING?

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

16. CAN YOU RE-ARRANGE THE FIGURES SO THAT EACH LINE ADDS UP TO 15 ACROSS, UP AND DOWN, AND CORNER TO CORNER DIAGONALLY?

The Mystery Gun-Runners of Kandabar

"FIGHT—BOASTER!"

By Trevor Hugh

THE sun poured down on the Hinduna hillside. A man in the native dress of a tribesman squatted in the shade of a boulder. His head was bent, his rifle and sword on the ground beside him.

The man was Lieutenant King of the Hinduna Lancers.

Although he was British, he had found no difficulty in getting a commission in the Hinduna Army; he had travelled all over Asia, was young and fit, and had gained awards for gallantry whilst fighting in Korea.

At the moment, however, no one would have taken him to be a soldier. For he was disguised as a member of the notorious Kandabar bandit tribe.

For days he had been steadily plodding through the foothills. Somewhere ahead, high up in the distant mountains, lay Kandabar. This was the secret stronghold of the fierce, warring tribesmen. It was towards this native fortress that King was making his perilous journey.

King was faced with a terribly dangerous job. News had reached the Colonel of his Regiment that the Khurd, the chief of the Kandabar tribes, was planning a war against the people of the low-lying plains. The Khurd needed rifles and ammunition. These were being smuggled secretly to him.

The smugglers and their route must be discovered and the war prevented. King had volunteered to undertake the task. He spoke the language like a native, and with his skin dyed a deep brown he looked a tough tribesman.

The hills seemed deserted. Yet King knew that for days he had been spied upon from the crags above. And the nearer he drew to the mountainous paths which led up into the rocky hills, the keener was the watch from the unseen spies.

Suddenly a stone rolled down from above. It had been dislodged by someone hidden in one of the crevices higher up.

A trickle of dust fell at his feet. King, in a single movement, leapt erect, snatched up his weapons, and sprang aside.

With a soft thud a powerfully built native, wearing only a loin cloth, and grasping a long knife, landed on the spot where the Lieutenant had been but an instant before. King grappled with him.

Soundlessly they struggled. The native strove to wrench free his knife arm, but King's fingers were slowly crushing the wrist until, with a gasp of pain, the hillman's grip relaxed. The knife fell to the ground. King twisted the man's arm up and behind his back. With a scream, he collapsed. Lying on the

Daring Secret Agent in Sensational Bid to Smash a Tribal Rebellion

ground, groaning, he gazed up at King in whose hand was now grasped a rifle.

"Man," King growled in the Kandabar language, "why do you wish to kill me? Am not I but a harmless traveller?"

The native glared at him sullenly. He rubbed his wrist in pain.

"Always thou go onwards towards the mountains," he grunted. "Why?"

"I go to Kandabar," King replied. While he spoke his eyes were darting over the surrounding rocks and crannies. He was sure his attacker was not alone.

"Thou art not a man of Kandabar," the native snarled. "What do you seek? The great chief, the Khurd, will have thy tongue slit."

King prodded the man with his rifle.

"I go to offer myself to the Khurd," he bluffed. "I am a mighty warrior, a fighter with sword and rifle. If what I have heard is true, he will have need of men like me."

The native smiled craftily and his eyes strayed upwards. From a ledge nearby rose a figure, then another and another. King's face showed no fear as the tribesmen came from their hiding places. Within a few moments he was surrounded by a score or more of the fierce hillmen of Kandabar.

"We will take thee to Kandabar," one of them snapped. His cruel features broke into a harsh grin. "There we will test thy bold talk, O mighty boaster."

"Take me to thy Khurd," King demanded.

For hours the tribesmen climbed. King kept a keen grip on his rifle and all the time he was carefully noting the route they took. Higher and higher into the rock-strewn mountains their path wound. Finally, when they came to the top of a high cliff, King saw the city of Kandabar rising in front of them.

"Look well, boaster," one of the tribesmen jeered. "Yonder is Kandabar. Soon thou will face the mighty Khurd."

King gazed at the thick, fortified walls of the tribal stronghold. It was perched on a peak, with only one entrance. Everything that entered Kandabar must go by that steep, narrow path which led to the strongly-guarded gate. King wondered how many smuggled rifles had already passed through the gate.

The narrow streets of Kandabar were thronged with tough, hard-looking tribesmen. They all wore bandoliers of bullets and carried rifles. King noted that none of these was of modern pattern.

If it was true that rifles had already reached the Khurd, then he had not yet issued them to his followers. King must discover the arsenal in which the Khurd stored his weapons.

King was led through the crowded, noisy streets. Soon they reached the massive door of the palace.

"Here is a man who claims he is a better warrior than all others," the leader told the guards, with a jeering grin. "Take him to the mighty Khurd that he may put this boaster to the test."

The leader of the guards stepped forward. King eyed him. Here indeed was a huge man. His face was scarred with sword cuts, his arms thick as tree trunks. He stared at King, then spat.

"Ay-ya," he guffawed. "Come, man who calls himself a warrior. Let the Khurd see thee. He is hungry for amusement. No doubt he will let me cut you into small pieces."

King laughed. Secretly he was pleased. Everything had so far gone exactly as he had first planned. The hill tribesmen had brought him to the city of Kandabar, and now he was to be taken to the Khurd.

He followed the bodyguard through courtyard and passages. They came to a great room, at the end of which was a huge throne of ivory and gold. And seated on the throne was a small, bearded man. On his head was a bejewelled turban, glittering with precious stones. At his feet lay a pet lion cub.

The massive guardsman dropped to his knees, bowing his head to the ground.

"O mighty Khurd, protector of us all, I bring to you this man. He is a great boaster."

The Khurd stared at King. He saw a tall, keen-eyed man, wearing the clothes of a tribesman, armed with a rifle and at his belt a curved sword. King stared back, boldly and showing no fear.

The Chief of the Kandabar tribes smiled, slowly and cruelly.

"The smallest dog barks the loudest," he sneered. He looked at his giant guard and then turned to King. "Thou shall show us how a boaster fights."

With a triumphant roar the huge bodyguard stripped off his robe and turban. He stood in a loin cloth, muscles rippling and tensed. His vast hands were spread like two terrible talons as he moved towards King. The Englishman let out a laugh and tossed aside his weapons. He also stripped to the loin cloth he wore beneath his native gown.

The Khurd nodded with glee. He settled himself to watch his bodyguard tear this boaster to shreds. And the men who surround his throne roared with excitement as they saw the two fighters circling.

King tensed. This was going to be a hard fight!

UNMASKED!

WITH a sudden rush the guard hurled himself at King, who stood his ground. The powerful native's hands snatched at King's throat. The Lieutenant's arms swept upwards and outwards, and the clawing hands were forced wide apart. King lowered his head, and butted. His head caught the native hard under the chin. For an instant the giant was thrown off balance.

King's left first dropped, then came up with terrible force. It smacked the point of the other's jaw. A right followed, rattling the guard's teeth. King leapt after him, fists jabbing. The native let out a blood-curdling snarl of rage as clenched fists smashed into his ribs.

The guard's stamina was terrific. King's punishing blows would have felled any ordinary man. The guard glared ferociously at his attacker. Then, roaring threats, he gathered himself together, and leapt.

King moved swiftly backwards. His foot caught in a rug, and next moment he was falling. The native shouted triumphantly and threw himself bodily on top of King, pinning him to the floor.

"Ay-ya, ay-ya," the Khurd shrieked in excitement. "Tear him limb from limb. Ay-ya!"

His voice trailed into astounded silence as he watched what looked almost like a miracle.

For a brief instant King lay quite still as the giant guard pressed down on him. The huge native bellowed with cruel lust. His strong hands relaxed their terrific grip on King's arms and moved towards his throat.

That was what King was waiting for. His knees came up and his hands closed on the native's thighs. With an immense thrust of his knees he hurled his enemy upwards while his hands twisted the man's body.

The Khurd gasped in astonishment. His huge bodyguard was hurled, spinning over and over, across the room. With a crash that shook the walls, he fell spread-eagled and stunned on the stone floor.

King leapt to his feet, strode across the floor and placed his foot on his K.O'd enemy's neck.

" O mighty Khurd," he called out in a loud voice, " have I not proved myself a great fighter? "

" Ay-ya," the Khurd nodded his turbanned head. " Thou art indeed a man. Let none again call thee a boaster. Instead, I will honour thee. Thou art now my man. Day and night ye shall be at my side Thou art my personal guard."

He pointed to the fallen bodyguard.

" Away with the dog," he roared. " Throw him into the lion pit."

King stepped forward.

" No, mighty Khurd," he protested. " It was a good fight. Let him live. Kandabar will have need of him in the war against the men of the Plains."

The Khurd started and stared at King. In his eyes was a deep suspicion.

" What know thee of a war? " he snapped.

" Is it not true then, O Great One? " King asked, pretending surprise. " Is it not also true that many guns and much ammunition is coming to Kandabar through the secret paths of the mountains? "

" Thou talkest too much," the Khurd roared in fury. For a moment King feared he had indeed said too much. Then the Khurd smiled cunningly.

" Ay-ya." The Khurd beckoned King to him. " Listen, thou man of strength. What thou has said is true. But let not a word be spoken of these things outside this room, or thou will lose thy tongue."

The Khurd glanced at the defeated man.

" Let him live," he growled, and waved him from his presence.

The crestfallen guard backed away, bowing. At the door he straightened up and looked at King. And in his glance there was a murderous hatred. Then he turned and disappeared.

Tall and erect, King took his place beside the Khurd's throne. The Khurd clapped his hands and commanded that messengers should be brought to him. Keenly the Lieutenant listened to all that they had to tell their chief.

News was being speeded to the Khurd from all parts of his mountainous kingdom. It came by fleet-footed natives. And it told of the gathering of the tribesmen. At many points they now waited, high up in the steep hills. They waited for the Mighty Khurd's call to war; and they waited for modern guns.

It was late in the day when, at last, King heard mention of gun smuggling. A heavily-bearded man was brought before the Khurd. His clothes were stained with dust. He looked weary from hard riding.

" Mighty One," he greeted the chief, " I bring thee news."

" At last," the Khurd growled, his eyes lighting up. " Thou has news of the guns? "

" Yea, O Khurd." The man looked around. " It is for thine ears alone."

The Khurd nodded. Briefly he gave a command. The tribesmen around him withdrew to the far end of the great room. He waved King away. Reluctantly Lieutenant withdrew beyond ear shot.

The two men whispered, the Khurd's head nodding, a pleased look on his face. King guessed that the news the messenger had brought was satisfactory. It must mean that the guns the Khurd so anxiously awaited were on the way. Perhaps, King thought, they had already arrived and were even now being hidden away in the Khurd's secret store.

He must discover the whereabouts of the store. It would be nearby, probably in the palace itself. And he must also very quickly find out how the guns were reaching Kandabar.

The messenger withdrew, bowing low. King was anxious to see where the man went. Rapidly he thought of an excuse to absent himself.

" O Mighty Khurd," he said, " my stomach cries for food."

Impatiently the old man glanced round at him.

" Aya—a man must eat," he grunted. " Get thee food."

Quickly King strode from the great room. Outside, he glimpsed the messenger hurrying round a corner. He sped lightly and quietly after him. He turned the corner and was just in time to see the tribesman disappear through a doorway.

Cautiously King peered through the door. On its far side was a courtyard, busy with native porters. They were struggling with long-shaped, heavy packages of rugs which they were unloading from pack mules.

As King watched, the porters carried their loads into a stone-built store in the centre of the courtyard. When they came out, they were still carrying the rugs. But now the rugs were light in weight. Keenly, he stared at the rugs. King recognised their make. The rugs were hand-made in the native market of Zultan, hundreds of miles distant.

In a flash he saw what this meant. The guns were being smuggled wrapped inside bundles of rugs. They were being sent to Kandabar by mule trains from Zultan. The men who brought the mules up into the mountains passed themselves off as rug traders.

There was a look of grim triumph on his face as he turned. He now knew from where the guns came, how they came, and where they were stored. Two things only now remained to be done. To destroy the guns, and to prevent any others reaching the city.

He hurried back to the great room, his mind busy with plans to defeat the Khurd and his evil schemes. The Khurd was no longer seated on his gold and ivory throne. Instead, he was snoring lustily on a silken divan, his pet lion cub at his feet. All around the

big room, men lay sleeping in the afternoon heat, stretched on the floor.

King suddenly realised how tired he, too, was. He set himself down on the floor, his back against the divan. The lion cub opened one eye, blinked at him and then shut it. King's head nodded. Then he too, dozed.

He woke with a start. Something wet was pressing his face. He opened his eyes, then grinned. It was the lion cub, licking his cheek. Yawning, King got to his feet. The Khurd stirred, stretched and sat up.

For a moment, the native chief stared at King, frowning. Suddenly his eyes narrowed and he slid to his feet. His finger pointed at King, and he broke into a roar of rage.

"A spy," he screamed. Instantly every man in the room was on his feet, knives and swords drawn, glaring. Almost stunned with surprise, King stared at the hostile ring of faces. Then, in a jewelled mirror, he saw his own reflection.

The lion cub had licked clean the brown-stain dye from one side of his face. Beneath it now showed only the light tan of a sunburnt Englishman!

INTO THE LION'S DEN

KING whipped his rifle to his hip. But he was too late. From behind him, a tribesman sprang and together they crashed to the floor. Other tribesmen joined in. Soon King was pinioned, his arms tied behind him.

"To the pit with him," the Khurd screamed, kicking furiously at his prisoner. "Feed him to the lions. Death to the infidel."

At the door to the great room appeared the defeated bodyguard. He stared with wicked joy at sight of King, bound and unarmed.

"Give him to me, O Mighty Khurd," he begged. "We will have sport with the white pig."

The Khurd nodded. With an evil chuckle the bodyguard pushed King from the great room. He prodded him along a passage, past savage tribesmen who roared with hate when they learned the prisoner was a spy.

"He goes to the lion pit," the guard bellowed. The cruel natives yelled with excitement. Here was fun indeed. Eagerly they followed into a huge courtyard. In its centre was a deep, wide pit. King was thrust to its edge He gazed down into its depth.

Prowling the floor of the pit was a massive lion. Its tail flashed in rage at the ring of faces above. A mighty roar shook the air.

"Thou mighty fighter," the guard sneered as he slashed free King's bonds, "show us how you fight a man-eating lion."

With a sudden push he toppled King into the pit. The crowd of blood-thirsty tribesmen screamed excitedly. The lion snarled up at them, its great yellow fangs bared.

King landed on his feet. Instantly he crouched against the far wall facing the great beast. He cast a quick eye at the sun. It was glaring into his eyes and it gave him a desperate idea.

From his loin cloth King wrenched the tiny compass he always carried. Quickly he turned it over. Its back was of polished steel. The lion was crouching, about to spring. King held the compass in the palm

"A spy!" roared the Khurd, pointing. His pet lion cub had licked the brown stain from the disguised Lieutenant King's face, revealing white skin. It seemed that King's attempt to learn the rebel leader's plans was doomed to failure.

of his hand, out of sight of the screaming watchers above

The powerful sun was reflected from the back of the compass across the pit, straight into the lion's eyes. It faltered, swinging its head from side to side. Vainly it tried to get rid of the strange light that blinded it. Grimly King kept the sun focussed on its eyes.

A sudden hush fell on the watchers. Amazed, they gazed down into the pit. They stared at the lion, pawing the ground, shaking its head, roaring with rage, yet not attacking its victim.

Slowly, daringly, King advanced towards the lion. All the time he kept the steel compass playing its blinding sun-ray into the beast's eyes. But he was careful to keep it hidden from the watchers above.

"See, men of Kandabar," he called to them. "See, even the king of beasts fears me. I have no weapons, yet I am not afraid."

"Ay-ya, it is so," they muttered. Suddenly they moved back, bowing low. The Khurd himself had come to see what was happening.

The Khurd suddenly snarled a command. Instantly, a rope was lowered into the pit. King grasped it. Quickly, he shinned up it to the pit's rim. The giant guard pointed a rifle at him.

"His magic has saved him from the lion," the Khurd growled. "But he is a spy, so must die. Take him, and shoot him."

The guard nodded, eyeing King with evil pleasure. At gun point, King was marched away.

They reached the exit to the courtyard. In King's hand was still hidden the compass. The guard was right behind him, his gun jabbing into King's back at every step. They entered a dungeon. This was where he was to be shot.

As King stepped into the cell, he opened his hand. The shining, silvery compass fell to the stone with a metallic clatter, and rolled. The guard's eyes shot downwards. For a moment his gaze followed the strange, shiny object.

That was what King had planned. Like a tiger he leapt. His powerful grip fastened on the barrel of the rifle. With a tremendous twist, he wrenched it from the startled guard's grasp. Swiftly he swept it aloft and brought it down on the native's thick skull.

The fiendish yells of rebel tribesmen lining the lion pit turned to shouts of wonder. For the savage lion, instead of leaping at King, cowered and began to retreat. What was the amazing explanation?

The man dropped without a sound. Grasping the rifle and picking up his compass, King ran lightly from the dungeon, leaving the unconscious figure on the ground. He now knew his way around the great palace. Swiftly he sped to the courtyard where the gun store stood.

The courtyard was empty of all but a single native. He stood guard at the entrance to the gun store. King thrilled. The door was open.

The man had his back to King. Next moment, he was lying face down on the ground. King was on top of him, pressing the breath out of his body until he lost his senses. Instantly, without stopping to bind him, King jumped to his feet and peered into the storeroom.

It was a large, low-roofed room. Racks ran round its walls, and on these were stacked the latest type of rifle. Hundreds of them. In the centre of the room were boxes and boxes of cartridges. Enough to arm a large-sized army.

King had already decided on what he would do once he found the secret store of weapons. He wasted not a moment. The fact that the door was open told him that someone was coming back to the store very soon.

He slipped inside. Rapidly he broke open a box of cartridges. He put one after another into the crack between the door and its frame and pulled away the bullets, leaving the cases. He poured out the gunpowder from each case until he had a small pile.

Swiftly he laid this in a trail to the door of the store. Then he made a heap of cartridges at the other end of the trail, in the centre of the store. Round these he grouped box after box of explosives.

He ran back to the entrance, and tore the curved glass from the face of his compass. Using this as a magnifying-glass, he focussed the hot sun-rays on to the gunpowder trail. Almost at once a wisp of flame appeared, and licked away hungrily along the powder trail towards the centre of the storeroom!

KIDNAPPING THE BANDIT CHIEF

KING did not wait. He dragged the unconscious native to the far side of the courtyard, then turned and ran. He sped swiftly into the palace, and along a passage which would bring him to its front exit. Just near the door, he hid, crouched behind a stone pillar, waiting.

There came a roar, then another, then a tremendous explosion! The palace shook, the ground trembled and heaved. Acrid smelling smoke came pouring blindingly through the palace. Shrieks and cries of alarm and fear rent the air.

Men were running, screaming and shouting, in all directions as the gun store split asunder in ever louder roars of bursting explosives. Great orange flames hurtled skyward. Massive blocks of stone

burst asunder Everywhere was sudden terror and confusion.

King smiled grimly. Whatever might happen to him, he had succeeded in one part of his purpose. He had destroyed the Khurd's great store of arms. Without them, there could be no war. Now, he must. escape and return to the Regimental headquarters Any further rifles must be stopped from being smuggled from the bazaars of Zultan to the Kandabar tribesmen

Under cover of the confusion and panic he sped towards the palace doorway. Then. suddenly, the Khurd himself appeared, staggering dazedly.

Into King's quick mind came a daring plan. The Khurd was old and small. He was light in weight. King snatched up a rug. With a rapid movement he leapt at the Chief of the Kandabars. Before the dazed Khurd knew what was happening, he was completely smothered and wrapped in the folds of the rug King picked him up and threw him over his shoulders. His strong arms prevented his prisoner from kicking. The rug smothered his shouts

Out of the palace King hurried. There was too much panic everywhere for the scurrying tribesmen to take note of a half-naked man, who looked like a coolie, carrying a package. Men were rushing to the palace. King raced away from it.

Through the narrow streets he sped. The gate to the fortified city came in sight. At its exit were tethered horses, the swift steeds of the Khurd's hillmen. Quickly he untied the biggest among them, slung his burden on its back and leapt into the saddle. He grinned when he noticed the rifle strapped to the saddle.

With a clatter of hooves he was away, streaking down the steep mountain path from the gate. A shout told him he was seen. He did not look back. Instead, he spurred on his mount, racing at reckless speed round steep bends, past jagged spurs of rock, down towards the distant plains.

Yells and the pounding of hooves told him that the tribesmen were in full pursuit. On and on he sped, crouched low and holding fast to his precious prisoner.

The mountainous path twisted and narrowed. There was barely room to squeeze between the high, sheer walls of the canyon through which he was racing. He glanced swiftly aloft. His pursuers were not far behind. But abruptly he reined his horse to a halt. He jumped down.

With tremendous agility he climbed the cliff-like sides to a ledge forty feet above. On his shoulders he carried his prisoner, still folded in the smothering rug. On the ledge he stripped away the rug. The Khurd staggered to his feet. his eyes red with rage and hate.

Down the narrow path thundered the tribesmen. Their horses slithered to a halt as they saw King's mount. He came to the edge of the ledge, rifle in hand, the Khurd held firmly in front of him.

"Men of Kandahar," he called down to them, "behold your Khurd. See, he is alive."

The tribesmen screamed with fury at King, their rifles waving in the air. They dared not shoot for fear of hitting their mighty Khurd.

King thrust his prisoner to the very edge of the cliff.

"Your Khurd dies," he shouted, "unless you give me your word, in the name of the Prophet, that there will be no holy war."

Roars of rage shook the cliff wall. King pushed the chief even nearer the edge, until he was hanging perilously over its sheer drop.

"Swear there shall be no holy war, O Mighty Khurd," he commanded. "Swear—or you die And make your tribesmen give their oath too."

The Khurd made to struggle. King ruthlessly held him over the edge. From below came cries of alarm.

"We swear. On the Beard of the Prophet," came a shout. King's lips parted in a grim, triumphant smile. He shook the Khurd

"Swear your oath," he snapped, "or, by Allah, I will drop thee."

"I swear," the Khurd cried. "There shall be no war, I swear it."

King sighed with satisfaction "Order your men to return to Kandahar," he ordered. "Thou shall follow later"

The Khurd made no attempt to argue. He gave the order in a shaky voice. The tribesmen turned their horses and obediently galloped back up the pass. King watched them depart, then turned to the Khurd.

"Thou art free," he said. "I return to my Regiment. I shall tell my Colonel that the Mighty Khurd of the Kandahar has sworn his solemn oath not to make war."

"Ay-ya," the Khurd mumbled, nodding his aged head. "My word is sacred. It shall not be broken. The Kandahar tribesmen will not harm thee, or the people of the Plains."

King smiled. The Khurd would never break his promise There would be no war. He had accomplished his purpose. And now, all that was left was to return to Zultan, to his Regiment.

There would be no more guns smuggled into Kandahar from the bazaars of Zultan. King smiled grimly as he climbed back on to his horse and turned its head towards the foothills and the Plains. Not only had he destroyed all the guns so far smuggled through the hills, but he now also knew from whence they came

It was going to be hard indeed for the villains who had sent those guns, wrapped in rugs, to the Khurd Very soon the gun smugglers would all be in Zultan's massive gaol.

King glanced back. The Khurd was watching him ride away. And on his face was a smile

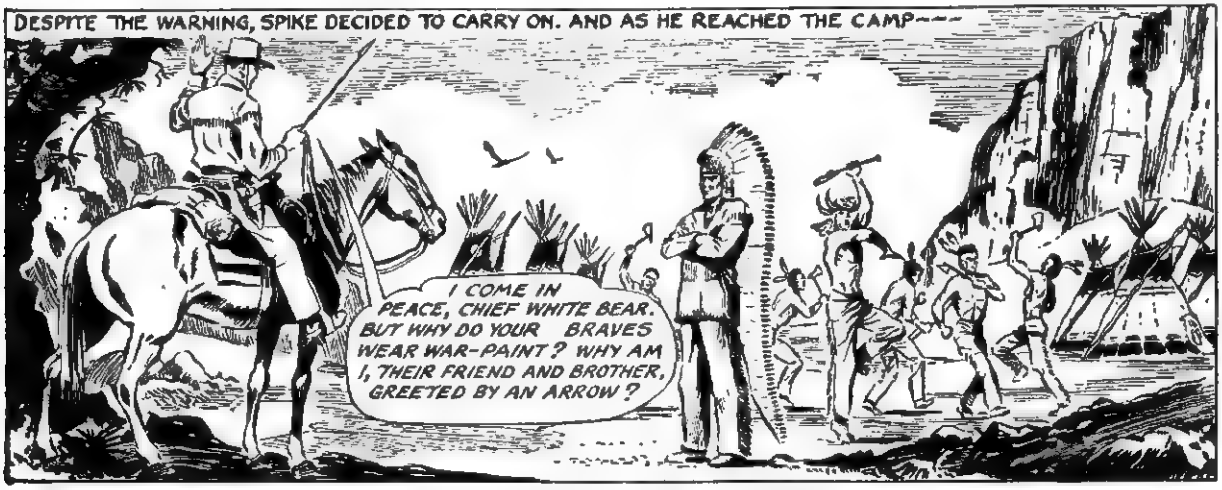
"Ay-ya," the Khurd called after King. "Thou art indeed a great fighter and warrior!"

Sheriff Spike AND THE STOLEN TOTEM

BY DEREK KNIGHT

NOT FAR FROM THE WILD WEST TOWN OF CORDITE, ACROSS THE MOCHITA RIVER, WAS A COMANCHE INDIAN ENCAMPMENT. FOR MANY YEARS THERE HAD BEEN PEACE BETWEEN RED MAN AND WHITE MAN. SPIKE NAYLOR, SHERIFF OF CORDITE, AND WHITE BEAR, CHIEF OF THE COMANCHES, WERE GOOD FRIENDS. BUT ONE DAY, WHEN SPIKE WAS RIDING OUT TO VISIT THE REDSKIN CAMP—

SPIKE LEAPT TO THE GROUND AND EXAMINED THE SLIM SHAFT
A BLACK ARROW? GEE--THAT'S A WARNING TO STAY CLEAR OF THE COMANCHE CAMP! BUT I'M A GREAT PAL O' THE INJUNS. SOMETHING SERIOUS MUST HAVE HAPPENED


DESPITE THE WARNING, SPIKE DECIDED TO CARRY ON. AND AS HE REACHED THE CAMP---
I COME IN PEACE, CHIEF WHITE BEAR. BUT WHY DO YOUR BRAVES WEAR WAR-PAINT? WHY AM I, THEIR FRIEND AND BROTHER, GREETED BY AN ARROW?

THE CHIEF REPLIED IN A COLD, HARD VOICE

THE ANCIENT TOTEM OF MY TRIBE HAS BEEN STOLEN BY WHITE MEN! MY BRAVES CRY OUT FOR REVENGE. SOON THEY WILL SWEEP DOWN ON CORDITE--AND BURN IT TO THE GROUND!

THE NEWS OF THE STOLEN TOTEM CAME AS A SHOCK TO SPIKE

IT IS BAD THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN ROBBED, O CHIEF, BUT AN ATTACK ON CORDITE WOULD DO NO GOOD. THE WHITE SOLDIERS WOULD COME TO PUNISH YOU. THEN OTHER TRIBES WOULD RISE AGAINST THE SOLDIERS AND THERE WOULD BE WAR

AS THE CHIEF HESITATED, LEAN WOLF, THE TRIBE'S MEDICINE MAN, DARTED FORWARD

HEAR HIM NOT, WHITE BEAR! THERE MUST BE VENGEANCE AGAINST THOSE WHO DARED TO STEAL OUR TOTEM!

THE TOTEM OF THE COMANCHES WAS A TOWERING BLOCK OF TEAK, STRANGELY CARVED AND COLOURED, HEAVILY INLAID WITH SILVER, ITS HEADDRESS SET WITH PRECIOUS STONES. IT WAS WORTH A FORTUNE! THE COMANCHES MUTTERED THREATENINGLY AS SPIKE ASKED CHIEF WHITE BEAR TO TAKE HIM TO THE SACRED GROVE WHERE THE TOTEM HAD STOOD

AT THE SACRED GROVE—

THERE IS NO TRAIL TO FOLLOW. BUT ONE OF THE THIEVES LEFT THIS SPUR BEHIND. IT IS OF A SHAPE MADE ONLY BY YOUR SMITH IN CORDITE

SPIKE EXAMINED THE SPUR--THEN STARTED TO SEARCH FOR CLUES

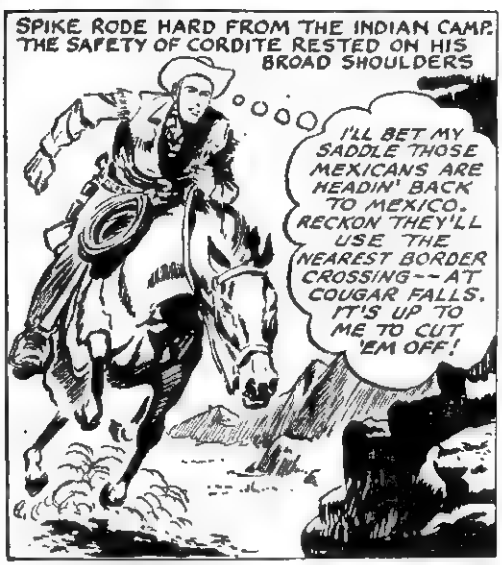
I SUSPECT, O CHIEF, THAT THE MAN WHO LEFT THAT SPUR DID SO ON PURPOSE--TO PUT YOU ON THE WRONG TRACK. PERHAPS I CAN FIND OTHER SIGNS

IT WAS TEN MINUTES BEFORE SPIKE FOUND SOMETHING THE THIEVES HAD NOT INTENDED TO LEAVE

A SILVER BUTTON FROM A MEXICAN JACKET! THERE ARE NO MEXICANS IN CORDITE, BUT—

A SUDDEN THOUGHT MADE SPIKE STOP SHORT. A FIGHTING GLEAM CAME TO HIS EYES —
GREAT SNAKES! A BUNCH O' FOUR MEXICANS PASSED THROUGH CORDITE YESTERDAY. I'LL BET THEY'RE THE HOMBRES WHO STOLE YOUR TOTEM. LISTEN, WHITE BEAR -- I'LL MAKE A BARGAIN WITH YOU!

A SHORT TIME LATER, CHIEF WHITE BEAR WAS ADDRESSING HIS BRAVES
OUR WHITE BROTHER, SPIKE NAYLOR, HAS PROMISED. THAT HE WILL FIND AND RETURN OUR TOTEM BEFORE THE SUN SETS. I COMMAND THAT YOU DO NOT TAKE THE WARPATH BEFORE THAT TIME


SPIKE RODE HARD FROM THE INDIAN CAMP. THE SAFETY OF CORDITE RESTED ON HIS BROAD SHOULDERS
I'LL BET MY SADDLE THOSE MEXICANS ARE HEADIN' BACK TO MEXICO. RECKON THEY'LL USE THE NEAREST BORDER CROSSING -- AT COUGAR FALLS. IT'S UP TO ME TO CUT 'EM OFF!

SPIKE KNEW THAT TO GET TO COUGAR FALLS, THE MEXICANS WOULD HAVE TO FOLLOW A WINDING TRAIL AMONG THE HILLS. A SHORTER ROUTE WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE -- BUT FOR THE FACT THAT A DEEP CANYON BARRED THE WAY. IF SPIKE COULD CROSS THAT CANYON, HE WOULD REACH COUGAR FALLS BEFORE THE TOTEM THIEVES!

SPIKE'S NEXT MOVE WAS TO THRUST THE POWDER INTO A HOLE AT THE BASE OF A TREE ON THE CANYON EDGE
THIS PIECE OF STRING WILL BURN LIKE A FUSE. I'LL SET FIRE TO IT -- THEN RETIRE PRONTO
FROM A SAFE DISTANCE SPIKE SAW THE POWDER EXPLODE. THE TREE TOTTERED, AND --
YIPPEE -- I'VE DONE IT! I'VE BRIDGED THE CANYON. NOW IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOU, FLAME, OLD HOSS
THE FAITHFUL HORSE DID NOT HESITATE
EASY, BOY. THAT'S IT! GENTLY, NOW -- GENTLY. C'MON, OLD FELLER
WITHIN A MINUTE THEY HAD CROSSED THE CANYON
ON YOUR WAY, FLAME! WE'VE A HEAP TO DO BEFORE THE SUN SETS!
TWO HOURS LATER SPIKE SPOTTED THE TOTEM-STEALING MEXICANS ON THE TRAIL TO COUGAR FALLS
SO THEY'VE STOPPED TO COOK SOME GRUB. HUH! IT'S THEIR GOOSE I'LL SOON BE COOKING!

LOPEZ, THE MEXICANS' FAT LEADER, WAS CHUCKLING CONFIDENTLY
EET WAS A VER' CLEVER IDEA OF MINE, EH, AMIGOS, TO LEAVE A SPUR FROM CORDITE IN THE COMANCHES' SACRED GROVE?
SI, LOPEZ, ZE REDSKINS WILL BE ATTACKING ZE TOWN, WHILE WE GET CLEAR IN TO MEXICO WITH ZE TOTEM

TWO OF THE GANG, HOWEVER, WERE FEELING UNEASY
BUT ZAT TOTEM--EET MAKES ME SHUDDER. I HAVE HEARD THAT IT CARRIES A COMANCHE CURSE. IT WILL BRING US BAD LUCK
AIEE, I T'INK SO, TOO

SPIKE, STALKING CAUTIOUSLY THROUGH THE TREES NEARBY, HEARD THE FRIGHTENED MEXICANS' WORDS
SO THEY RECKON THE TOTEM'S GOT STRANGE POWERS. BY HOKEY, THAT GIVES ME A HUMDINGER OF AN IDEA HOW TO CAPTURE 'EM, EVEN THOUGH MY GUNS ARE EMPTY

THE MEXICANS WERE JUST HAVING THEIR MEAL WHEN, SUDDENLY, ONE OF THEM GAVE A YELL OF FEAR
AIEE! THE TOTEM IS BEWITCHED! IT HAS COME TO LIFE, AND IS SLIDING UP THE BOULDER!
MAGIC! INDIAN MAGIC! RUN, AMIGOS, OR THE SPIRIT OF THE TOTEM WILL CARRY US AWAY!

ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE BOULDER, SPIKE WAS HAULING ON HIS LARIAT
THAT'S SCARED 'EM. NOW FOR THE NEXT MOVE

BUT LOPEZ AND THE OTHER MEXICAN WERE SUSPICIOUS
I DO NOT BELIEVE IN THEES INDIAN MAGIC
NOR I, LOPEZ. LET THOSE YELLOW DOGS FLEE. WE WILL SEE WHAT LIES BEHIND THAT BOULDER

HIDDEN IN THE BUSHES, SPIKE WATCHED TENSELY AS THE TWO MEXICANS CAME INTO VIEW
AH! THEY'RE JUST WHERE I WANT 'EM!
SEE, THE TOTEM WAS DRAGGED BY A LARIAT. THIS IS NO INDIAN MAGIC

IN SPIKE'S HAND WAS A SPRINGY BRANCH WHICH HE HAD DRAWN RIGHT BACK. AT THAT MOMENT HE RELEASED HIS HOLD, AND —
AAAGH!
BULLSEYE! HERE I COME
OUGH!

A FEW MINUTES LATER, ARMED WITH BOTH THE MEXICANS' GUNS, SPIKE WAS URGING HIS PRISONERS INTO THE CLEARING. THE OTHER MEXICANS HAD FLED
AND NOW, YOU TWO GREASERS, YOU'VE GOT WORK TO DO. THOSE AXES STRAPPED TO YOUR SADDLE ROLLS ARE GOING TO BE MIGHTY USEFUL

SPIKE'S PLAN WAS SIMPLE BUT DARING. THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY TO REACH THE COMANCHE CAMP BY SUNSET AND SO STOP THE REDSKINS TAKING THE WARPATH — AND THAT WAS BY TRAVELLING DOWN THE NEARBY, SWIFT-FLOWING MOCHITA RIVER. HE MADE THE BADMEN CARRY THE HEAVY TOTEM THROUGH THE TREES TO THE BANK, THEN SET THEM TO WORK BUILDING A RAFT

KEEP MOVING! IT'S ONLY TWO HOURS TO SUNSET, AND I'VE GOT AN IMPORTANT APPOINTMENT AT THE COMANCHE CAMP
YOU WILL NEVER KEEP IT, GRINGO. YOUR RAFT WILL BE SMASHED TO PIECES ON THE ROCKS IN THE RIVER

THAT'S JUST TOO BAD -- FOR ALL OF US. BECAUSE YOU TWO GENTS ARE COMING WITH ME. THE COMANCHES CAN COLLECT YOUR HORSES LATER
THE RAFT WAS FINISHED, AND THE TOTEM LASHED ABOARD. THEN OFF THE PARTY SET DOWN THE SWIRLING RIVER, WITH SPIKE STEERING
THIS IS MADNESS. WE WILL OVERTURN, AND I SHALL DROWN, FOR I CANNOT SWIM
IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT, GREASER. YOU SHOULDN'T GO AROUND STEALING TOTEMS
FOR MILE AFTER MILE THE RAFT SWEPT ALONG THE TUMBLING WATERS. SUDDENLY, AS IT CAME INTO COMANCHE TERRITORY, LOPEZ YELLED IN PANIC
THE RAPIDS -- THEY ARE DEAD AHEAD. WE ARE FINISHED!
INSTANTLY SPIKE ATTACHED ONE END OF HIS LARIAT TO THE RAFT, AND THE OTHER END TO HIS WAIST
THIS RAFT ISN'T GOING OVER THE RAPIDS IF I CAN HELP IT. C'M ON, FLAME. RACE YOU TO THE BANK
TOGETHER, HORSE AND MAN PLUNGED INTO THE TORRENT
THEY WILL DROWN! NO MAN COULD SWIM IN THERE, AND THEN— WE TOO WILL DIE!
DESPERATELY SPIKE STRUCK OUT THROUGH THE SURGING, TEARING WATER. HE WAS ALMOST ALL-IN WHEN—
JUST MADE IT. NOW WE'VE GOTTA USE THE LARIAT TO STOP THE RAFT FROM SHOOTING OVER THE RAPIDS

MEANWHILE, IN THE COMANCHE CAMP, THE INDIANS WERE GETTING RESTLESS
SEE, SUNSET DRAWS NEAR, O CHIEF. AND STILL THE WHITE MAN HAS NOT RETURNED WITH OUR STOLEN TOTEM
IF THE SHERIFF FAILS US, THEN THE TOWN OF CORDITE WILL FALL TO OUR WEAPONS

A MILE AWAY, ON THE RIVER BANK, SPIKE AND FLAME WERE ENGAGED IN A TENSE TUG-OF-WAR WITH THE TOSSING RAFT
PULL, SENOR, PULL! WE ARE ON THE VER' EDGE OF THE FALLS
DIG YOUR HEELS IN, FLAME, OLD HOSS. WE GOTTA GET THAT TOTEM TO THE COMANCHES AFORE SUNSET

EVERY EYE IN THE COMANCHE CAMP WAS UPON THE SETTING SUN. AT LAST IT TOUCHED THE HORIZON!
THE TIME HAS COME TO AVENGE THE THEFT OF OUR TOTEM. TO YOUR HORSES, COMANCHE BRAVES. WE RIDE ON CORDITE!

A SHRILL, SPINE-CHILLING WAR-CRY ROSE FROM THE MASSED BRAVES AS THEY MOUNTED THEIR STEEDS. BUT EVEN BEFORE THE ECHOES HAD FADED —
HOLD HARD THERE, COMANCHES! THE SUN HAS NOT QUITE SET. AND I HAVE RETURNED WITH THE THIEVES AND YOUR TOTEM!

THE COMANCHES THREW ASIDE THEIR WEAPONS JOYFULLY
WELCOME, O SHERIFF SPIKE! HARDLY CAN I BELIEVE THAT YOU HAVE RESTORED OUR TOTEM TO US SO SOON. THE HATCHET SHALL BE BURIED; PEACE SHALL REIGN AMONG US ONCE MORE!
THAT'S REAL GOOD NEWS, CHIEF. WAAL, RECKON I'D BEST BE GETTING BACK TO CORDITE, AND PUT THESE TWO MEXICANS WHERE THEY BELONG—IN JAIL

AND SO, WITH THE CHEERS OF THE COMANCHES FOLLOWING HIM, SPIKE DEPARTED WITH HIS PRISONERS. HE HAD PREVENTED WAR BETWEEN REDSKINS AND WHITE MAN!
NOW, YOU GREASERS—GET MOVIN'!

CAPTAIN BLUNT'S SECRET MISSION

A SPY IN ENEMY SPAIN

By Michael Alan

"BELOW, there."

Captain Paul Blunt, the youngest of Good Queen Bess's fighting captains, stood at the poop rail of his frigate *Devon Maid* as he shouted a command to the first mate on the deck below.

"Below, there," he called again. "Furl topsails and mains'ls, and put out a sea anchor. We'll bide here till midnight."

"Aye, aye, sir," The mate bellowed the order to the crew of the watch and, like monkeys, they scampered aloft while the chief Bo'sun, Jonathan Hobbs, bent a canvas to act as sea anchor.

"And, Mr. Mate," Blunt commanded. "See to it that all lantern lights be put out. We want no Spanish vessel from yonder port o' Barcelona to espy the *Devon Maid*."

He gazed keenly into the night but not a sail could he see. Only just beyond the horizon, as his charts showed, was the great Spanish port in which lay the ships of his Queen's enemy. Many a battle he and his sturdy crew of Plymouth seamen had fought with the ships of the Spaniards, but now a fight was the last thing he wanted. For Captain Blunt was on a secret mission, sent by the Queen to these Spanish waters, and he had chosen this moonless night for his purpose.

He turned to the burly Bo'sun.

"Bo'sun, assemble all hands on deck."

"Aye, Cap'n." Jonathan Hobbs passed on the order and soon the crew was assembled. Blunt strode to the poop rail and looked down at his crew of sturdy English sailors, most of them from the *Devon Maid's* own port of Plymouth.

"Men," he addressed them in a clear voice. "Over yonder lies Barcelona. 'Tis mightily fortified, with gun batteries at the harbour entrance and cannon a'plenty guarding the sea walls."

"It do zound loik they Dons be a-real fear'd o' zummat," a broad Devonshire voice drawled amid a roar of sturdy laughter.

He Sought a Man in the Midst of the Enemy—and He Found Him, Too!

"Aye, lads," Blunt smiled. "They've had many a taste of English blade and shot. But heed ye, carefully. 'Tis for a secret mission the *Devon Maid* is in these waters, and at midnight the first mate will take charge of the ship, while I go ashore. With me must come one man—one o' ye. Who will offer?"

One united roar answered him and every man's hand was raised. Blunt chuckled as he gazed with pride at his trusty crew. Then he singled out one man. "You, Master Hobbs," he said to the Bo'sun. "Ye shall accompany me. Come to my quarters."

Below, in the light of a swinging oil lamp, Blunt unlocked a sea chest and from it he tossed some clothing to the Bo'sun. "Get ye dressed in these," he ordered.

The Bo'sun picked them up, then gasped. "Cap'n, these be the clothes o' a Spanish seaman."

The Captain was already stripping off his own doublet and hose. He laughed at Hobbs' surprise, and quickly climbed into the rough clothing of a Spanish sailor.

"Ye speak truly, Bo'sun," he grinned, looking at himself in a mirror. "'Tis a pair o' Spaniards we now are. At seven bells, half-an-hour before midnight, we'll up anchor and sail to within a league of the Spanish coast. Ye and I will then take the ship's dinghy and pull ashore."

The Bo'sun grinned and spat on his hands with joy at the prospect of action and excitement. "Be we a-goin' to fight zum o' they Dons, zir?"

"Not this night, lad," Blunt chuckled. "'Tis to rescue a brave Englishman. He awaits our coming in the city of Barcelona. The *Devon Maid* has been sent by the orders of none less than the Queen herself."

The Bo'sun whistled. "'Tis a daring venture Cap'n. What be your plan, zir?"

"Dressed in these clothes, we will enter the city by one of its gates. There we will seek for one, David Shaw, the brave Englishman we are sent to rescue. He is living in Spain as a spy, attempting to discover what evil plots the King of Spain be hatching agin' England."

"That be rare dangerous," the Bo'sun muttered. "If they Dons caught him they'd put him to the torture."

By dawn the next morning, Blunt and the Bo'sun had gone ashore by dinghy, and cautiously they made their way towards the great port of Barcelona.

The gates were not yet open, and Blunt looked round for a safe place to hide until they were open and the road became busy with country people going to the city. Nearby, a deep gully ran beside the road, its sides thick with bushes and long grass. It was an old river bed.

"An excellent hiding place," Blunt murmured. Together, they climbed down its banks, and slid beneath some bushes.

As the sun's first rays lighted the sky there came from the city sounds of stirring, and along the road came the heavily-laden farmers on their way to market. The great gates swung open.

"Hist, Bo'sun." Blunt was peering towards the gates. From them had appeared a troop of mounted Spanish soldiers. Rapidly they galloped along the road, scattering the peasants. Suddenly, as they reached the top of the gully their commander rapped out an order. The soldiers swerved their horses and, in pairs, they rode down its bank and spread themselves out!

THE CHAMBER OF TERROR

"ZOUNDS. The soldiers are coming this way," Blunt growled as he drew Hobbs deeper into cover. Two of the soldiers approached, then halted. They were talking as they gazed around. Blunt listened.

"They're hunting an escaped prisoner," he whispered, for he could speak Spanish and understood what they were saying. "'Tis a sad mischance they seek him here," he added grimly as the two soldiers dismounted and with drawn sabres slashed at the long grass and shrubs.

"Cap'n, they'll be atop o' us," Hobbs muttered.

The rest of the soldiers were scattered far up the gully.

"Have at them," Blunt rapped suddenly.

The two Britishers, in their disguise as Spanish sailors, rose from their hiding place and launched themselves at the Spaniards.

With a startled cry the two soldiers, halted, staring at the men in Spanish seamen's clothes who had risen in front of them.

"Ha, deserters from our navy," one of the soldiers snarled. "For deserters 'tis death."

With a vicious slash of his sabre he whirled the weapon at Blunt's head. Blunt, with all the skill of a born sword fighter, jumped aside. Bo'sun Hobbs grappled with his man.

Blunt ducked as his attacker again slashed furiously at him. The sabre whistled by over his head. He saw the Spaniard's exposed jaw above him. Leaping up, he crashed home a hammer blow to the man's chin—his enemy collapsed in an unconscious heap.

"So much for you, my friend," chuckled Captain Blunt—then turned to see how Bo'sun Hobbs was faring with the other Spaniard.

Hobbs needed no help. He was just in the act of spinning his adversary on his heels. As the man twisted helplessly, a bunched fist of the burly Bo'sun's hit him in the back of the neck. With a soft groan the Don collapsed, senseless, on his limp companion.

"Quickly, into the bushes with them," Blunt commanded, glancing anxiously along the gully. In the distance the other soldiers were still searching, unaware of the fight that had just taken place. "Hither, Bo'sun. We must haste to enter the city before the others miss their two comrades."

Quickly they climbed the banks of the gully. They reached the road and mingled with the peasants trudging towards the city gates. Blunt nudged his companion.

"Now we face a great test. We must enter the city and seek out David Shaw, whom we are to rescue. If any questions be asked, ye must make pretend ye are deaf and dumb."

The Bo'sun nodded. "Aye, aye, zir," he whispered.

At the great gates the Spanish guards were watch-

fully staring at the peasants as they passed. The sight of two seamen among the country folk caught their attention.

"Hey, seamen, stand fast," the Guard Commander shouted. "What are you two doing out o' port?"

The Bo'sun's face wore a dumb expression as Blunt answered in perfect Spanish.

"We have been visitin' our folk, sir," said the Captain boldy. "They be countryfolk."

The Commander eyed them suspiciously.

"Your papers," he snapped. "Show them."

Blunt's pulse quickened. This was an unforeseen danger. They had no papers or passes.

Suddenly there came the sound of pounding hoofs, and two of the mounted soldiers galloped furiously up to the gate from the road outside, scattering peasants and guards.

"Two of our men have been attacked," they roared. "Bring out your guards to aid in our search."

"No need," the Guard Commander snapped, and in his hand he now held a pistol which he was pointing at Blunt. "Methinks we have the attackers here. These two sailors."

The man on horseback pushed his way roughly through the crowd and stared down at Blunt and Hobbs.

"Neither o' these is the escaped prisoner," he snapped and then, as he peered at the Bo'sun's blue eyes he jerked his sabre from its sheath. "This dog is no Spaniard," he bellowed. "He is an accursed Englishman."

At his words the guards surrounded the two seamen, hustling them savagely into the guard-room at the side of the gates.

"Englishmen, eh," the Guard Commander snarled, and struck Blunt harshly across the mouth.

"Bind them," he curtly ordered, and quickly the prisoners' arms were firmly tied behind them. Then they were forced to march between their captors. Along dank stone passages they stumbled until they reached a flight of stone steps up which they were pushed. At the top a guard unlocked a door and next moment they found themselves in a great hall.

At the far end of the hall was a wide table at which were seated a group of hooded figures. At sight of them Blunt instantly knew who he and the Bo'sun now faced. This was the dreaded Spanish Inquisition, the cruel and evil masked judges who sentenced their prisoners to the most terrible tortures.

Blunt and the Bo'sun found themselves standing in front of the long row of black-masked men.

"Answer truthfully our questions, ye dogs, and we may spare ye your lives," one of them growled in a harsh and evil voice. "Who be ye, and by whom are ye sent to Barcelona?"

Blunt's lips closed tightly together. The Bo'sun did not understand the language and so could not answer. Blunt's stubborn silence brought a snarl of rage from his questioner, who leaned across the table and struck him cruelly on the mouth.

"Speak, ye pig!"

Bo'sun Hobbs roared in anger at this treatment of his captain. He shoved his foot hard against the table. With a clatter it shot backwards and the men seated on the other side toppled backwards off their chairs as it hit them.

With a howl of fury the guards fell on their prisoners, striking them viciously, knocking them to the floor.

"To the torture chamber with them," screamed a judge, and the two defiant Britishers were hauled to their feet and dragged from the great hall, through dark passages, down stone steps to a great iron door where soldiers stood on guard.

As the door was flung open, the glare of searing red-hot fires burning in great braziers met their eyes. Long-handled iron bars stuck out from the fierce flames. In the middle of the floor was a great machine, like a bed without a mattress. This, Blunt guessed, must be the rack, the terrible torture machine on which victims were strapped with hands and feet spread out, and then slowly their limbs were stretched until the men gave up their secrets, or were torn apart. But first, the victims were tortured by branding with the long-handled iron bars.

"Tie them to that stone pillar," ordered the Guard Commander. He turned to a huge, hairy, half-naked creature dressed only in knee-breeches. This was the torturer, a hardened, callous ruffian who delighted in seeing how much agony his victims could stand.

"These are English spies," the Commander snarled. "Put them to the torture until they speak and tell us their secrets." He laughed evilly. "And may the devils die cruelly, after they have spoken." He turned and marched out, and the door was shut behind him. Only the torturer remained. With wicked pleasure he eyed his two victims tied to the pillar.

"Cap'n, if we have to die, I swear I'll die like an Englishman, without a murmur," the Bo'sun vowed.

But Captain Blunt was determined that neither he nor his staunch companion should die. Somehow they must escape from the torture chamber and complete their mission by rescuing David Shaw, the English spy.

INTO ACTION WITH A FIRE-SHIP!

BLUNT flexed his muscles, testing his bonds. The ropes cut into his arms, but as he stretched his fingers they touched those of the Bo'sun, on the other side of the pillar.

"Bo'sun," he whispered. The torturer was busy with his bellows, blowing up the furnace fire. "Canst feel my hands?"

Hobbs wriggled his fingers, and they touched Blunt's. "Aye, Cap'n," he whispered back. "I can feel thy wrists, zir, and the rope binding they 'Tis tied cruel tight."

"Keep your hands still a while," Blunt whispered urgently, a surge of desperate hope filling him. "I can feel a knot. Steady, lad."

His fingers, bent until they were shot with pain, probed and dug at the knot. His nails scratched feverishly, tearing at the strands.

Frantically, Blunt renewed his efforts, ignoring the agony in his cramped and tortured fingers as, one by one, he felt each hair in the rope snap.

Suddenly he felt Hobbs' hand move with a jerk.

"'Tis free, Cap'n," the Bo'sun breathed. "My wrist is free. Hold your hand, zir."

His free hand found the knot binding Blunt's wrist. With his seaman's training, he quickly had it loosened and next moment Blunt had his hand free. The pillar partly hid him from the torturer, and with all speed he untied his other wrist.

Blunt cautiously peered round the pillar and a grim look was on his face as he prepared to launch himself against their enemy. Near to where he stood was a great stack of wood faggots for the fires. He stooped and picked up a thick, strong piece of the timber. With a mighty leap he was across the torture chamber. The massive figure of the torturer turned at the sound and Blunt struck. The heavy piece of timber crashed down on the Spaniard's skull. Without a murmur he fell, unconscious.

The Captain wasted no time. He raced back to the Bo'sun and in a moment he, too, was untied and free.

"That were wonderful smart, Cap'n," Hobbs whispered happily.

"No time to lose," Blunt replied, gazing intently round the great stone chamber. "Ah, we'll go that way."

He pointed to an opening halfway up one of the walls. "That be the shute down which the timber for the fires is delivered. And that will be our means of escape, if we be lucky."

Quickly Blunt, followed by Bo'sun Hobbs, explored the opening. It was a shaft sloping upwards. At its upper end was a trap door. Standing on the Bo'sun's shoulders, Blunt pushed. To his joy, the trap readily gave and very cautiously he peered out into a small quadrangle. It was empty. Next moment he was standing in the yard, hauling the Bo'sun up beside him. And as he was closing the trap, from the torture chamber came a shout. Their escape had been discovered by the Guard Commander.

There was only one exit from the yard, through a passage. They sped along the passage, up a long flight of steps at the end, and found themselves on the parapet of the battlements which surrounded the city. Rushing along it towards them were Spanish soldiers, alarmed by the Guard Commander.

"By the Lord Harry, 'tis awkward," Blunt growled. "Soldiers on one side, and more will be coming from the other direction, I'll be bound." Hastily he looked around and made a swift decision. "Come, Bo'sun—on to that wall."

As he spoke he took a flying leap from the parapet across a wide space. Beneath lay a drop of twenty feet, and beyond it the narrow top of a wall which ran round a courtyard. Blunt landed safely on the wall.

The Bo'sun hesitated, looking down at that deadly gap between the parapet and the wall. Then, gathering his courage, he jumped. He landed on the wall, swayed, and his foot slipped. But Blunt's strong grip saved him and pulled him back, gasping, to the wall top.

"Come. No time to waste," Blunt snapped as the Spanish soldiers reached the parapet edge, halted and stared with fury at the two escaping prisoners as they ran along the narrow high wall, which ended at a house.

Bo'sun Hobbs didn't like his captain being insulted. So he deliberately pushed the table over so that it crashed into the masked Spaniards!

Blunt looked upwards. Next moment he was shinning up the side of the house, using openings in the stonework as hand and foot holds. Hobbs followed behind until they reached the rooftop which was flat. The house adjoined another and they sped from roof to roof, leaving the guards standing helpless on the distant battlements, shouting threats.

"Down into that street below," Blunt ordered and they dropped from a roof on to a balcony, from there to a lower roof and thence to the street where passers-by stared at them open-mouthed as the two disguised sailors raced away.

After a while Blunt halted and stood listening. He could hear no sounds of pursuit.

"Seems we have succeeded in making our escape," he said with a chuckle. From a pocket he pulled out a slip of paper on which was drawn a plan of the city of Barcelona.

"Aye, zir," the Bo'sun grinned. "What be that, Cap'n?"

"The direction telling me where to find our man, David Shaw, the English spy whom we have come to rescue." His fingers traced the streets shown on the

plan. "Luckily, his address be not far from here."

Cautiously they made their way in the direction shown by the map. At last they found themselves standing in front of a wood-turner's shop. Working busily at a carpenter's bench was a young man who looked up with a friendly smile as the two man in Spanish seamen's dress stood watching him.

"Greetings, senors," he said in Spanish. "You are interested in carpentry? I have much to show." He pointed to chairs and tables he had made.

Blunt eyed him keenly then, slowly, he asked: "Which is the best timber for your work?" This was a question by which the spy was to recognise that the man who asked it was his rescuer.

The young carpenter stared at him intently. "There are many timbers," he replied. "For what purpose would you need timber, senor?"

"Perhaps, to build a ship. For that I would need oak. And it would not be Spanish oak."

The young carpenter dropped the chisel he was using and stepped forward, his hand outstretched, a glad light in his eyes.

"No, it would be the oak of England," he whispered. "You are come from England, to rescue me?" He was now speaking in English and the Bo'sun grinned with glee as he heard the question. "I am David Shaw. Who be ye, sir?"

"Captain Blunt of the *Devon Maid* and at your service, Master Shaw," Blunt answered. "Sent by Her Majesty to carry ye back to Plymouth."

"Brave news indeed, Captain," David Shaw exclaimed. "For I have information of the most terrible importance. But come ye within for fear Spanish guards see you."

He led the way into a back room.

"What is this news, Master Shaw?" Blunt asked. The spy lowered his voice, looking round to make sure no passers-by should overhear him.

"'Tis an evil Spanish scheme," he murmured. "None less than to launch against England a mighty fleet of giant ships the like of which was ne'er before seen. Each is heavy laden with cannon and these great vessels tower to a great height so that our little English fighting ships will look like ducks against swans. This vast fleet is to invade England. In the great harbour of this city lie many of these great vessels, ready to take to sea."

Into Blunt's eyes came a twinkle. His quick mind was already busy scheming a plan to strike a blow against this new weapon of the Spanish Navy.

"Tonight the sky will be moonless," he mused. "Ye, and the Bo'sun and me can carry out a plan of destruction which will halt this mighty fleet before it can get under sail."

"What do ye plan?" Shaw asked eagerly.

Blunt chuckled. "To set a fireship adrift tonight in the dark in the harbour amid these great vessels!"

Shaw and the Bo'sun gasped.

"Zounds, Captain, ye are a brave schemer," Shaw exclaimed. "And if it succeeds, 'twill so delay the Dons that we'll be back at Plymouth and our fine English fleet warned long before the Spaniards will be able to build new vessels."

"We shall succeed," Blunt said with determination and he proceeded to instruct them what they must do that night.

It was midnight when the three crept forth and carefully made their way to the harbour where they could see the huge outlines of the anchored Spanish galleons. All was quiet; the crews slept. Quickly the Englishmen gathered together buckets of pitch, wood shavings and oils from a store at the quayside, and loaded them on to the deck of a small sailing vessel moored to the quay.

Soon, a great pile of shaving, pitch and oil was spread from bow to stern. Blunt smiled grimly at his two companions as he gave a quiet word of command.

"Cast off fore and aft," he whispered, and at once the current carried the vessel out into the harbour. Sitting in the stern, the Bo'sun skilfully steered the ship towards the line of anchored men-o'-war.

No word of alarm sounded from the quayside as the ship drifted nearer and nearer to the great, silent Spanish galleons. Suddenly Blunt signalled to David Shaw. Instantly, with tinder and steel they set fire to the huge pile of shavings!

In a moment, a roaring fury of red flame was sweeping the length of the sailing ship as shavings, pitch and oils all ignited. Quickly the ship itself became a blazing mass of drifting destruction, its hungry flames licking up the sides of the Spanish ships as it drifted past the anchored vessels.

Furiously the riggings took fire, furled canvas sails burst asunder into flaming masses of falling debris as galleon after galleon caught fire. Shrieks and cries burst forth as the Spanish crews rushed on to their decks and dived overboard.

Blunt, with Shaw and the Bo'sun, was already away from the fireship before ever its flames could touch them. They had leapt into its small dinghy when the first flame was touched off by their flints. Now, as the huge galleons became mighty torches of flame floating on the surface of the harbour, they rowed furiously towards the harbour mouth.

The night was fast becoming as bright as day. Galleons broke away from their anchorages, their anchor ropes burnt through. They drifted into still more galleons, adding to the terrible destruction which was now spread right across the harbour.

At the harbour mouth Blunt paused on his oars to look back at their night's work, and he burst into a mighty chuckle.

"Look ye, Master Shaw," he said, pointing. "Yonder burns the mighty Spanish fleet. This night's work will give them but a taste of what shall be their fate if they dare sail into English waters."

And with a powerful laugh of joy at the success of his daring mission, Blunt bent his back once again to his oars. The three would have an exciting tale to tell when they rejoined the *Devon Maid*!

JINGO JONES
and His INVISIBILISER

By Tom Stirling

FOOLING THE FARMER

WHEN you see a notice "Cycling Prohibited," you should get off your cycle and walk. Of course, if you don't see the notice, you can just continue cycling.

My pal Bob Day and I thought of taking the short cut to school the other afternoon, but a "Cycling Prohibited" notice barred our way along the path.

"Only one thing to do, Bob," I decided.

Out came a torch-like gadget from my pocket. It was the invisibiliser! And just what was needed at that moment.

Z-z-z-z-z!

Out shot rays and the board vanished from sight!

I ought to mention that this invisibiliser is a highly scientific device invented by my Uncle Septimus, who is a big noise in the world of science, and knows the inside of an atom as well as he knows the inside of his own hat—when he can find it! It's quite simple. I press a button on the gadget, rays are generated which make anything they fall onto invisible.

"Ah well, off we go again," I chuckled.

We hadn't gone ten yards before some busybody stopped us. He was a local farmer. He put his hand up and we stopped.

"You boys blind?" he asked.

"No," said Bob.

"Just come back a few yards with me. There's a notice that says 'cycling prohibited'," he rapped.

So we returned to where the notice had been. The farmer looked around and about, puzzled

"That's funny," he muttered. "H'm."

"I see no notice," I exclaimed.

He muttered, made a movement of the hand as if telling us to buzz off, and we went cycling on our way. Just before we reached a main road, we dismounted—but even so a car that had been speeding along the road pulled up at sight of us.

"Now for it. Someone else going to tell us we shouldn't cycle along the path," I grunted.

"School governors, too," muttered Bob.

I recognised them myself then—two of the "killjoy" types. One, a shortish chap in a dark suit with a long face, and named Mr. Stinte, came over to us.

"Have you boys been in the local museum?" he asked sternly

Gosh! He wasn't going to tell us off for cycling along the path after all. And we hadn't visited the local museum for a couple of years.

" No sir," I answered briskly

" Rather not, sir," said Bob with a grin.

The governor drew up as if shocked.

" That's nothing to laugh at. Mr. Lees," he rasped, turning to his companion and fellow governor. " Just as I thought—these boys have not been to the museum."

Mr. Lees clucked his tongue.

" Their cultural education is deplorably neglected. I think we had better go and see the Head to find out if any boys at all have been to the museum in the last year. We may find that none have. That would be scandalous."

" Shocking," agreed Mr. Stinte.

Bob and I blinked as they went back to their car. We had been so delighted to say " no " to their question that we hadn't thought the right answer might be " yes."

" Gosh, this may mean a spot of bother," said Bob, shaking his head. " After those governors have had a word with the Head, he'll take it out of any chap who hasn't been to the museum."

I looked at my watch. We had about ten minutes to spare before school, thanks to having taken the short cut.

" Just a minute, Bob. Cheer up. How about a trip to the museum now? " I said. " We'll pop in and have a quick look at the stuff there. We can sign the visitors' book and skip out."

Bob thought it a wizard idea—and so it was. The Head wouldn't feel too happy if the governors asked how many boys had been to the museum lately and he would have to answer " none."

This is where we saved the honour of the school!

The museum was on our route and we got there in no time. Up we marched and pulled open the door. But then—

" Hey—you! "

A tough-looking man in the uniform of porter, came striding forward from inside the museum. He was carrying a broom in one hand and a cup of tea in the other.

" We've come to see the museum," I said.

" Get out," he snorted. " I'm not having boys here mucking the place about. I've only just swept it."

Bob and I aren't got rid of so easily.

" We want to come in," I said. " The school governors want us to improve our knowledge."

He took the broom as if it were a rifle and bayonet, having put down his cup of tea.

" Come one step across this threshold," he said fiercely, " and I'll clock you both."

I bowed politely.

" We don't want a clock or a broom," I said. " So, good morning."

When I turned I made his cup of tea invisible. Just a touch of the invisibiliser's button was enough.

" We're giving in? " asked Bob, as we strode out.

" Of course not. Must sign the book, ass. I'm going back invisible, and you can come too if you like."

Bob was game. We have often been invisible, and although it's an odd sensation, neither of us mind it. All I had to do was to focus the gadget on to us and press the button. Z-z-z! Z-z-z! Bob and I disappeared.

Invisible—although of course we were still as solid and alive as ever—we turned round and went up the steps to the door. The door was locked, so I knocked.

Back came the porter, snorting. He peered through the glass, and seeing no one, opened the door and looked left and right.

" Those boys," he muttered.

Although he stepped out, he didn't leave enough room for us to enter, so I put the button of the invisibiliser into reverse and then directed the rays around the lobby. I was trying to make his cup of tea visible again. As I guessed, he had been looking for it in vain.

The cup became visible, and I reached in for it. I placed the cup on the step outside.

The porter suddenly spotted it.

" Well, my cup o' char! " he gasped. " How'd it get there? "

Down the steps he went to get it, and in rushed Bob and I, almost colliding in the doorway because we couldn't see each other.

Once we were in, I made the two of us visible again!

There wasn't much excitement in the museum. Lots of glass cases full of flint axes, bits of rock, some old furniture, uniforms and firearms.

The visitors' book was on a desk, so Bob and I wrote our names in it.

" May as well look around," I whispered. " Can't loiter or we'll be late."

But Bob caught my arm.

" Gosh—look! The porter is locking the door from the inside—locking us in," he muttered.

" Dratted boys," we heard the porter mutter.

He locked the door, pocketed the key and went into a side room. We were prisoners. And if we didn't get to school within a few minutes, there'd be trouble! We had not time to lose, even though loitering in the museum might seem to the Head a good excuse.

" How are we going to get out now? " muttered Bob. " We're sunk! "

JINGO—THE JAPING SPOOK

I HAD an idea. Just behind me was a uniform worn by a drummer boy at the Battle of Waterloo.

I turned the invisibiliser on myself and disappeared. Bob looked at me, pushing his cap back off his forehead. He was puzzled. What was I up to?

It took me but a minute to put the uniform on. As I was invisible, the effect was odd—just as if a uniform with no one in it was walking about.

I grabbed the drum, and marched along tapping it. At the third tap the porter peered out from the side room. He took one look and his eyebrows almost touched his hair.

" Whw—wh—wha— " he goggled.

Words came from the " empty " uniform. It was me speaking of course, but the porter didn't know that, for I was invisible. " Porter, us boys don't like the way you treat us. Next time some lads come along—let 'em in."

He stood with eyes bulging. I turned and marched along, about turned and marched back to the stand.

The porter grabbed the telephone and spoke to the curator at the other end.

"Sir. It's me. I'm seeing things. You know the drummer boy uniform. Well it walks and talks! It's just spoken to me. Eh? Dreaming? Of course I wasn't dreaming. I'm wide awake. Someone playing a joke? Impossible! You come down and see for yourself. I'm not staying here alone."

He hung up the receiver and then went to the door and unlocked it. Bob and I galloped after him, throwing the drummer boy's uniform on to the floor behind us.

We wasted no time, but rushed to our bikes. Of course we couldn't ride along invisible on visible bikes, and we didn't want to be completely invisible on the road for fear of being run over!

However, it was easy enough to become visible again by using the invisibiliser button in reverse. So off to school we went.

We were late. Our janitor, Sergeant Bellow, had just shut the gates and he pulled faces at us through the bars.

"We should have brought some nuts," I told Bob.

"Not allowed to feed them," said Bob.

The Sergeant scowled.

"You'll have to have a good excuse for being late. The Headmaster isn't very pleased. He's got Mr. Stinte and Mr. Lees with him."

"Well, we got delayed at the museum," I said casually.

"Museum?" yelled the Sergeant. "You mean you've actually been there?"

"Just dropped in on the way to school," I said.

"That's very unlikely," snorted the Sergeant with a short laugh. "Mr. Stinte and Mr. Lees have complained to the Head that boys haven't visited the museum for ages. That's why the Head has ordered me to take a party of the most intelligent and learned boys there this morning."

"If you don't believe us go and look in the visitors' book at the museum," I insisted.

The Sergeant opened the gate and gave us a rather puzzled look. Then he grinned and beckoned us to follow him. He led the way to the Head's study where he rapped on the door.

"Two late boys, sir," he said.

"What?" came the Head's voice angrily. "Don't bother me now, Sergeant. Take a note of their excuse, if any—"

"They were delayed at the museum, which they visited on their way to school sir," said the Sergeant.

The Head rushed to the door, tripped over Mr. Stinte's foot, caught the door, clung to it, and steadied himself.

"What's this? Jones and Day? Is this the truth?" he exclaimed. "You have actually visited the museum?"

"Why, yes, sir. I trust that isn't against the rules?" I replied.

"Against the rules? You jolly well know, Jones—

"Halt — or I shoot!" ordered the shaking porter, levelling the old musket. He wasn't to know that the "ghost drummer boy" was really an invisible Jingo Jones!

I mean, you are well aware, Jones, that I have always encouraged you boys to visit the museum at all times. Did you sign the visitors' book there?"

"Yes, sir."

He smirked. The two governors in his study were absolutely flabbergasted.

"In the circumstances I will excuse your being late, boys. You see, gentlemen," he went on, addressing the governors, "these boys were so engrossed in looking round the museum, that they must have completely forgotten the time."

We then turned smartly. But we had gone only half a dozen steps when the Head called.

"Jones! Day! Wait. Sergeant!"

"Yessir," said the Sergeant.

"Jones and Day can act as guides to the party you are taking to the museum this morning."

Bob and I looked at one another and winked.

Going to the museum wasn't the same fun as seeing a film or a circus, but it was better than swotting lessons.

With the Sergeant, Bob and I marched into our form room, where Mr. Ratkins was just setting the chaps a stiff test from his maths book. He was

rubbing his hands and now and then picking up the cane and thwacking the desk with it, just to show everyone what to expect when they failed the test.

"Jones! Day! How dare you come in at this hour," he thundered.

Of course the Sergeant told him that we and a dozen other chaps, had to go to the museum in order to improve our knowledge. Naturally, Mr. Ratkins argued. He felt as if food was being snatched from his very mouth, or hands whipped away at the moment the cane was whistling down.

He "h'mm'd" and "ha'd" but finally he had to let a dozen chaps go free. And of course while he was arguing the toss, I made the cane and his maths book containing problems and answers invisible.

Out we went to the quad where we lined up. The Head, smirking, came out to inspect us followed by the two governors.

"Accustomed though most of you are to visiting the museum in your leisure moments," said the Head, without even winking at us, "you will still be able to find something of interest likely to improve your minds. On your return you will write an essay on your visit, and the one with the most lifelike and spirited description of what you see there will be awarded a prize by Mr. Stinte and Mr. Lees."

Then, under the Sergeant's wing so to speak, we sped off. Only a few minutes later the Sergeant was striding up to the museum door.

The porter looked out.

"Well, what do you want?" he scowled.

"We've come to see the museum," said the Sergeant.

"Well, you've seen it. Take an eyeful and go. We're holding an investigation. Public not admitted."

"Eh? Who said so?" asked the Sergeant darkly.

"I did! And it's the first time I've seen you here."

"I suppose I can improve my mind?" said the Sergeant sharply.

"I dunno. Still, nothing's impossible!"

With that, the porter began to shut the door.

Our Sergeant doesn't give in easily. His foot was ready and he put it in the right place to keep the door from shutting.

The porter charged to shut it; the Sergeant charged to open it.

"Come on chaps," I said. "Charge!"

A SHOCK FOR JINGO

WE charged and the porter went tottering back as we and the Sergeant burst into the lobby.

"What's going on here?" came an angry shout, and a white-haired man approached us. He was the curator.

"Schoolboys?" he howled. "They'll smash the place up. Listen you," he snapped at the Sergeant. "You're responsible for any damage these boys do."

"They're here to improve their minds, not to spoil the museum," said the Sergeant indignantly. "Any lad who starts messing about—Mugworth put that battle-axe down!"

Just to quieten things, I slipped away. I took the drummer boy's drum and made it invisible. Then I tapped it.

Tom! Tom! Tom!

"Hark," cried the porter. "The ghost drum."

"That's a tap dripping," snorted the Sergeant. "There's no ghost drum here."

"Oh, no?" said the porter nastily.

"No," said the Sergeant.

"Perhaps you know more about this museum than I do? Perhaps it would surprise an ignorant fellow like you," said the porter, "to learn that this very morning that drummer boy's uniform walked with a ghost in it. I saw it."

"You're crackers," grinned the Sergeant mockingly.

"Come outside," the porter said to the Sergeant. "I've had enough of your cheek."

Of course I couldn't let a fight start, so I made myself invisible. Then, while the doorman and the Sergeant were scowling at each other, I put on the drummer boy uniform.

"Yowp! Look!" yelped Mugworth.

Everyone looked. A uniform, apparently empty, came walking along. The Sergeant fell back his face pale, his eyes goggling.

"It is—it's a ghost," he said thickly. "Porter, I take back all I said. You were right."

The curator uttered a cry. "A ghost drummer!"

The porter rushed away and came back with a musket from the Battle of Waterloo.

"Halt or I shoot," he cried.

It was time for me to vanish—uniform as well, so I brought the invisibiliser into action. With dramatic suddenness, right before their very eyes, the uniform disappeared into nothing.

There was a hush.

"Gone," said the curator. "Vanished."

"But that's our uniform," howled the porter.

In the confusion I put the invisible uniform back, and made it visible again. Then I became visible myself and joined the rest.

No one noticed the uniform back on its stand!

At that moment the doors opened and the Head came in, followed by the governors.

"Quiet!" commanded the Head, shocked. "Is this how you boys treat a treasure house of culture?"

Luckily the curator was there and explained about the ghost and how it and the uniform had vanished. The Head frowned.

"But surely that is the drummer boy uniform," he boomed, pointing.

Everyone stared in amazement at the uniform, back on its stand.

"The ghost has returned it," cried the curator. "That is the only explanation."

"If the story about the ghost drummer boy spreads, sir," I said, "this place will be thronged with people. The museum will be more popular than the local cinema."

By gosh, I was right. The museum had to buy a new visitors' book. The place was packed—newspaper reporters, villagers, and sightseers from all over the place.

They were all hoping for a glimpse of the ghost drummer boy. It's a good job they didn't know that my invisibiliser was responsible—otherwise I'm pretty sure they'd have been queueing up outside my house!

THE UNMASKING OF ZANU THE WITCH-DOCTOR

By HUGH TEMPEST

DAN CARSTAIRS WAS DISTRICT COMMISSIONER OF THE LEOPARD HILLS AREA IN THE HEART OF AFRICA. HE WAS HOLDING A PALAVER WITH SOME CHIEFS ONE MORNING WHEN SUDDENLY A NEWCOMER ARRIVED

IT IS CHIEF KATUNA OF THE LIMO TRIBE, BAAS

SO I SEE, TOGA. SOMETHING SERIOUS MUST HAVE HAPPENED TO MAKE KATUNA LEAVE HIS NATIVE VILLAGE

THE MOMENT GREETINGS WERE OVER, CHIEF KATUNA GRAVELY TOLD DAN THE REASON FOR HIS VISIT

I AM MUCH TROUBLED, AND I COME TO YOU FOR HELP. DAY BY DAY, MORE AND MORE OF MY WARRIORS GO INTO THE JUNGLE — AND NEVER DO THEY RETURN. I FEAR THAT BEFORE LONG NOT ONE OF THEM WILL BE LEFT!

DAN STARED AT THE CHIEF IN AMAZEMENT

BUT WARRIORS CANNOT VANISH LIKE SMOKE FROM YOUR FIRES, O CHIEF. HAVE YOU NO IDEA WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM?

LORD, UP IN THE HILLS LIVES ONE CALLED ZANU. HE IS A STRANGE WITCH-DOCTOR. MIGHTY ARE HIS POWERS. HE IS USING BAD JU-JU TO ROB ME OF MY WARRIORS

DAN HAD PREVIOUSLY HEARD RUMOURS ABOUT THE STRANGE WITCH-DOCTOR.
BUT NOTHING LIKE THE DISAPPEARANCE OF WARRIORS HAD EVER BEEN REPORTED TO HIM.
CHIEF KATUNA'S STORY FILLED HIM WITH GRIM MISGIVINGS.
SOMETHING SINISTER WAS GOING ON — AND IT WAS UP TO DAN TO INVESTIGATE IT

IT WAS LATER THAT DAY THAT DAN SET FORTH WITH TOGA, HIS YOUNG ZULU BOY, AND A CREW OF CHANTING NATIVES

CHIEF KATUNA DECLARES THAT ZANU THE WITCH-DOCTOR LIVES NEAR THE MOUNTAIN OF THE SUN. WE WILL SEEK HIM OUT AND FIND WHAT HIS GAME IS, TOGA

ME NO LIKE WITCH-DOCTORS, BAAS

EH-AY-AH-AH! EH-AY AH-AH!

FOR HOUR AFTER HOUR DAN'S CREW PADDLED UP-RIVER, HEADING FOR THE MOUNTAIN OF THE SUN. THEN, ALL AT ONCE, THEY STOPPED
LOOK, MASTER! THE RIVER IS TABU! WE GO NO FARTHER!
WE MUST GO BACK, OR THE CURSE OF THE SKULL WILL BE UPON US!
THE NEXT MOMENT, DAN'S PANIC-STRICKEN CREW WENT DIVING OVERBOARD IN TERROR
HOLD HARD, TOGA! I KNOW IT'S NO USE TRYING TO STOP THOSE FELLOWS — BUT SURELY YOU WON'T DESERT ME?
IT—IT D-DEATH TO G-GO ON, BAAS!
TOGA'S LOYALTY TO HIS MASTER OVERCAME HIS FEARS
WHERE YOU GO, I GO, BAAS. BUT SKULL BAD JU JU! KIM BRING DEATH
I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT THAT. GUESS I'LL HAVE A LOOK AT IT
DAN CAREFULLY EXAMINED THE SKULL — THEN WHISTLED WITH SURPRISE
BY THUNDER — IT'S NOT A REAL SKULL AT ALL! I RECKON IT WAS LEFT HERE BY ZANU THE WITCH-DOCTOR. HE HOPED IT WOULD KEEP EVERYONE AWAY FROM HIS TERRITORY. BUT IT WON'T KEEP US AWAY!
THIS SKULL IS MADE OF WHITE CLAY — AND THE ONLY WHITE CLAY IN THESE PARTS IS NEAR THE MOUNTAIN OF THE SUN, TOGA. I THINK IT WILL PAY US TO CALL ON FRIEND ZANU
ME STICK TO BAAS. P'RAPS WE FIND MISSING WARRIORS
TOGA CONTINUED TO PADDLE UP-RIVER — UNTIL A TERRIFYING HOWL CAME FROM A FIGURE ON THE BANK
THE CURSE OF ZANU BE UPON YOU, WHITE MAN, AND ALL WHO FOLLOW YOU. MAY YOU BECOME CROCODILE FOOD!
THUNDER! IT'S ZANU HIMSELF!

A SPEAR THROWN BY THE WITCH-DOCTOR WOULD HAVE STRUCK DAN. BUT TOGA CLEVERLY DEFLECTED IT WITH HIS AXE

DEATH WILL SOON COME TO THE WHITE MAN IF HE BREAKS THE RIVER TABU IT IS THE WILL OF ZANU!

HAVING UTTERED HIS SPINE-CHILLING THREAT, ZANU DISAPPEARED INTO THE UNDERGROWTH.
IN VAIN DAN AND TOGA SEARCHED FOR HIM.
THEN THEY RETURNED TO THEIR CANOE, DETERMINED AT ALL COSTS TO REACH THE MOUNTAIN OF THE SUN AND LOCATE THE WITCH-DOCTOR'S HIDE-OUT.
FOR ONLY THERE, DAN DECIDED, WOULD THEY BE ABLE TO SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF THE VANISHED WARRIORS

IT WAS ONE HOUR LATER THAT ZANU STRUCK AGAIN! DAN SPOTTED HIM, AND —

LOOK OUT, TOGA! JUMP FOR YOUR LIFE!

THAT'S THE END OF OUR CANOE ZANU MEANS BUSINESS — BUT WE'LL BEAT THE THUG YET!

HIM FULL OF BAD JU-JU. HIM NOT WANT US TO GET TO MOUNTAIN OF THE SUN

WITH THE AID OF TOGA'S AXE, DAN AND THE YOUNG ZULU BEGAN TO CLIMB UP THE CLIFF

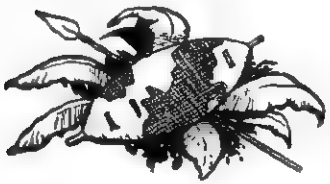
COME ON, TOGA THE FACT THAT ZANU TRIED TO KILL US PROVES THAT HE IS SCARED OF WHAT WE MIGHT FIND OUT I'M CERTAIN HE'S THE PERSON WHO CAUSED CHIEF KATUNA'S WARRIORS TO VANISH

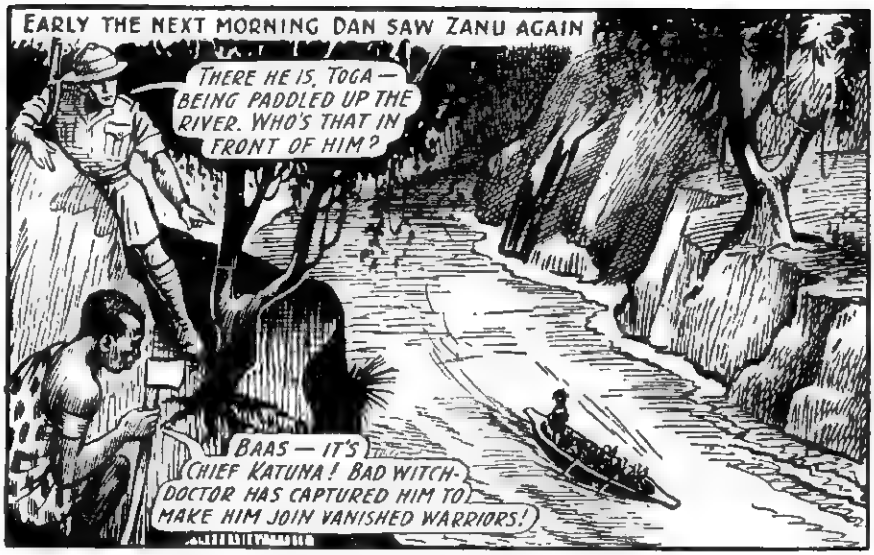
ON REACHING THE TOP OF THE CLIFF, DAN COULD SEE THE MOUNTAIN OF THE SUN — AND HE STARED AT IT WITH NARROWED EYES

THAT'S QUEER, TOGA. IT'S A VOLCANO THAT'S BEEN EXTINCT FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS — YET IT'S SMOKING!

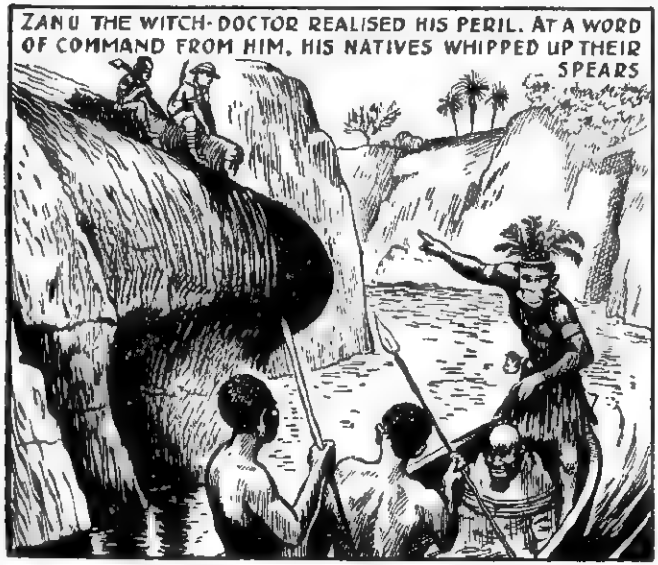
AND THE SMOKE IS CHANGING COLOUR, BAAS. IT IS BAD JU-JU

AS THEY WATCHED, THE SMOKE TURNED RED, THEN BLUE, THEN YELLOW. WAS THIS ANOTHER OF ZANU'S TRICKS TO KEEP PEOPLE AWAY FROM HIS HIDE-OUT? IF SO, WHY? WHAT WAS THE SECRET OF THE DEAD VOLCANO? DAN RESOLVED THAT HE WOULD NEVER GIVE UP THE QUEST UNTIL HE HAD FOUND THE ANSWER




EARLY THE NEXT MORNING DAN SAW ZANU AGAIN
THERE HE IS, TOGA — BEING PADDLED UP THE RIVER. WHO'S THAT IN FRONT OF HIM?
BAAS — IT'S CHIEF KATUNA! BAD WITCH-DOCTOR HAS CAPTURED HIM TO MAKE HIM JOIN VANISHED WARRIORS!

TO TOGA'S SURPRISE, DAN DARTED TO A FALLEN TREE-TRUNK
QUICK, TOGA — HELP ME TO START THIS SLIDING DOWN THE SLOPE. WE'LL RIDE IT TO THE RIVER AND HAVE A SMACK AT RESCUING KATUNA!



DAN AND THE ZULU BOY SURVIVED THE SHOWER OF SPEARS, AND THEN —
IN WE GO!
BOTH DAN AND TOGA WERE SWEPT OFF THE TRUNK, AND BY THE TIME THEY HAD SWUM BACK TO IT THE WITCH- DOCTOR'S CANOE HAD GONE OUT OF SIGHT
ZANU IS ON HIS WAY TO THE MOUNTAIN OF THE SUN. WE'LL FOLLOW HIM BY USING THIS LOG AS A BOAT
MY AXE HIM GOOD PADDLE, BAAS
FIGHTING AGAINST THE CURRENT, DAN AND HIS ZULU COULD MAKE ONLY SLOW PROGRESS
WE'LL NEVER CATCH UP WITH ZANU AT THIS RATE. HE MUST BE MILES AHEAD
AROUND THE NEXT BEND, HOWEVER —
HELLO — THERE'S ZANU'S CANOE DRAWN UP ON THE BANK. HE AND HIS PARTY MUST HAVE GONE ACROSS COUNTRY TO THEIR HIDE-OUT. WE'LL GO ASHORE, AND SEE IF WE CAN PICK UP THEIR TRAIL
WE VERY NEAR MOUNTAIN OF SUN NOW
JUST AS DAN WAS GETTING OFF THE LOG, TOGA GAVE A SHOUT
LOOK, BAAS! IT IS HEAD-DRESS OF WARRIOR IN KATUNA'S TRIBE
THE ZULU FISHED IT FROM THE WATER AND GAVE IT TO DAN
IT FLOATED OUT OF THAT TUNNEL WHERE THE RIVER DISAPPEARS. SO THE TUNNEL MUST BE ONE WAY TO THE WITCH-DOCTOR'S HIDE-OUT. WE'LL COLLAR HIS CANOE AND GO THROUGH IT, TOGA!
YES, BAAS. ME MAKE BIG TORCH TO GIVE LIGHT

BEFORE LONG, THE AMAZING JOURNEY HAD BEGUN
OKAY, TOGA?
Y—YES, B-BAAS
ALMOST INSTANTLY DAN KNEW WHY ZANU HAD NOT KEPT TO THE RIVER
HIPPO — SCORES OF 'EM! START USING YOUR AXE, TOGA
KEEP 'EM AT BAY! WE'VE GOT TO GET THROUGH
TOGA HAD TO FIGHT EVERY INCH OF THE WAY UNTIL —
THERE'S THE END OF THE TUNNEL WE'VE DONE IT, TOGA
WHEN HE PADDLED INTO THE OPEN, DAN GAZED AROUND IN STARK AMAZEMENT
WE'RE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE CRATER OF THE MOUNTAIN OF THE SUN! AND LOOK— THERE ARE THE RUINS OF AN ANCIENT, HALF-BURIED CITY, WITH MEN DIGGING AROUND THEM!
CAUTIOUSLY DAN AND TOGA CREPT UP A HILL OVERLOOKING THE RUINS
THE MEN BELONG TO CHIEF KATUNA'S TRIBE, BAAS THEY ARE THE WARRIORS WHO VANISHED
YOU'RE RIGHT, ME LAD. BUT WHY SHOULD ZANU THE WITCH-DOCTOR MAKE THEM DIG ROUND THESE RUINS?

SUDDENLY DAN PICKED UP SOMETHING FROM THE GROUND
SEE THIS, TOGA? IT'S A TIN-OPENER! AND NATIVES ROUND THESE PARTS DON'T USE TIN-OPENERS!
DAN HAD JUST POCKETED THE TIN-OPENER WHEN HE GOT ANOTHER SHOCK
WHAT'S THAT FLUTTERING FROM THE WINDOW OVER THERE?
ME THINK IT SIGNAL FROM MAN IN ROOM
EAGERLY DAN AND THE ZULU DASHED TO THE DOOR OF THE BUILDING
WE'LL HAVE THIS OPEN IN A COUPLE OF SHAKES
INSIDE THE BUILDING DAN FOUND SOMEONE HE RECOGNISED IMMEDIATELY
BY THUNDER — IT'S PROFESSOR FOWLER, THE FAMOUS EXPLORER!
THANK HEAVEN YOU'VE DISCOVERED ME! I'VE BEEN A PRISONER HERE FOR WEEKS!
BEFORE THE PROFESSOR COULD TELL HIS STORY, TOGA UTTERED A HISS OF WARNING
BAAS! ZANU HIM COME WITH CHIEF KATUNA!
ZANU MUST HAVE TRAVELLED OVERLAND BY A SECRET ROUTE THIS IS WHERE HE GETS THE SHOCK OF HIS LIFE
BE CAREFUL! THE NATIVES ARE SO TERRIFIED OF HIM THAT THEY WILL OBEY HIM TO THE DEATH

DAN CROUCHED BEHIND A WALL UNTIL ZANU WAS CLOSE ENOUGH, AND THEN —

YOU'VE HAD IT, YOU FAKE!

TO EVERYONE'S AMAZEMENT, DAN TORE OFF ZANU'S HEAD-DRESS AND BEGAN TO SCRUB THE WITCH-DOCTOR'S FACE WITH IT!

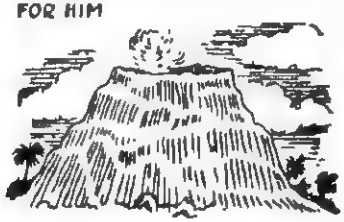
WATCH AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS TO HIS SKIN!

CRIES OF ANGER AROSE WHEN DAN HAULED THE WITCH-DOCTOR TO HIS FEET

ZANU IS A WHITE MAN IN DISGUISE! HE IS NO REAL WITCH-DOCTOR — WE NEED NEVER HAVE FEARED HIS POWER

I SUSPECTED HE WAS A FAKE WHEN I FOUND THIS TIN-OPENER — AND ALSO WHEN I CAME ACROSS THE SKULL HE MADE OF CLAY

PROFESSOR FOWLER THEN REVEALED THAT "ZANU" HAD BEEN THE GUIDE TO THE EXPLORATION PARTY.. WHEN IT WAS SUSPECTED THAT TREASURE WOULD BE FOUND IF THEY DUG AMONG THE RUINS OF THE BURIED CITY, "ZANU" HAD IMPRISONED THE PROFESSOR, DISGUISED HIMSELF AS A WITCH-DOCTOR, AND HAD TERRORISED THE WARRIORS INTO WORKING FOR HIM



PART OF HIS "MAGIC" WAS TO CREATE COLOURED SMOKE BY USING POWDER FROM THE FIREWORKS WHICH I BROUGHT WITH ME AS PRESENTS FOR THE NATIVES

TREASURE WAS FOUND AMONG THE RUINS; BUT "ZANU" DIDN'T SHARE IN IT. ALL HE WAS ALLOWED TO DO WAS TO SIT ON IT DURING THE RETURN JOURNEY TO DAN'S BUNGALOW!

WELL, CHIEF KATUNA HAS GOT ALL HIS WARRIORS BACK, "ZANU" IS BOOKED FOR JAIL, AND YOUR EXPEDITION HAS BEEN A SUCCESS, PROFESSOR

IF IT WASN'T FOR YOU AND TOGA, DAN, I SHOULD STILL BE A PRISONER IN THE MOUNTAIN OF THE SUN!

FLAT OUT FOR SPEED FAME

By Arthur Deam

WANTED—A TOP-NOTCH RACE-DRIVER

"THERE'S Halliday now. Gosh, I wonder if I stand any chance of getting into his team?"

Rick Raymond stopped his battered racing car at the grass verge and, pushing his goggles on to his forehead, hoisted himself on to the back of the bucket seat. Eyes shining, he gazed across the strip of grass that separated the road from the Caldon Motor-Racing Track.

Practising on the track now, a long, low green sports car was lapping. The number 3 on its side was almost a blur owing to its terrific speed, but Rick recognised the car at once. It belonged to the famous international racing driver, Jim Halliday, owner and leader of the Halliday racing team.

Halliday cars were known the world over for their speed, and their drivers for their daring. Only recently the team's No. 4 had retired from racing simply because he had come twelfth in a famous road race. A Halliday team-man never dropped below tenth.

Rick had learned through a racing magazine that Halliday still had a vacancy in his team. Rick's burning ambition was to be a racing driver, and he had driven here to Caldon to-day to ask Halliday for a trial.

The green racer disappeared round a bend in a flurry of dust. Rick slithered down into his seat again, pulled his goggles into place, and let in the clutch. With a purr the battered little car surged forward.

Rick listened to the engine-note with pride. He had built the car himself, out of scraps he had found in his father's garage; and he had already won with it in many amateur events.

Keeping to low gear, he steered for the Competitors' entrance to the racing track.

He was within two hundred yards of it when there came the purr of a high-powered engine behind him. Looking into his driving mirror, Rick saw a big red racer racing up behind him. A moment later the racer's horn blared warningly.

Rick set his teeth. He recognised that car. It belonged to Harry Marshall, son of a factory owner in his own home town. Marshall, a professional driver, never missed an opportunity to poke fun at Rick and his home-made car. Rick had heard he was after the Halliday job, too. But Rick was determined to get in first.

He eased his foot down on the accelerator!

The little car lunged forward like an arrow from a bow. From five yards, the distance between Rick

Rivals for a Place in Britain's Leading Racing-Car Team!

and Marshall grew to ten. Rick caught a glimpse of Marshall's furious face. Then the red car leapt towards him again, obviously with intent to overtake.

"Oh, no you don't!" breathed Rick.

He gave the little car all it had. The narrow entrance seemed to leap towards him. Behind him the roar of Marshall's engine became louder. The snobbish pro. driver was also determined to be first. Rick, out of the tail of his eye, saw the bonnet of the red car creep up almost in line with his cockpit.

The road narrowed. With the entrance drawing closer, Rick realised that only one of them could get in first. The superb red racer's bonnet was about to surge past. Its speed was far superior to that of Rick's car. But Marshall had not won yet. With skilful gear-changing, Rick selected third-gear—and pressed the accelerator pedal flat to the boards.

There came an angry shout from Marshall as Rick's car shot in front of that challenging red monster. For one moment Rick feared he had misjudged his distance and his speed would not get him clear in time.

But the battered racer didn't fail him. Its tail cleared Marshall's bonnet by a foot, forcing the ruthless rival to brake hard. Thanks to Rick's cool driving he had gained the lead!

A moment later Rick sped through the gateway, along a drive and pulled up before the drivers' pavilion.

As he pushed his goggles back on to his forehead, a tall, slim man in white racing overalls came towards him.

"Well done, youngster!" he said approvingly. "You took that challenge like a real professional. Or are you one? I've never seen you before, have I?"

Rick found himself gazing up into the face of Jim Halliday—the No. 1 of the great racing team.

"Er—no. I don't think so, sir," Rick managed to gulp. "I—I'm not a professional."

A track official came striding up. Rick recognised him as Mr. Denning, a regular customer at his father's garage. The man was frowning.

"I thought it was you, young Raymond," he said sharply. "You know you're not supposed to be here. This part of the track is reserved for competitors only—"

Jim Halliday raised his hand.

"That's all right, Mr. Denning. If there's any bother, say I invited him." He dropped a hand on Rick's shoulder and Rick beamed with pleasure. "You know, youngster, you're a very good driver. Quite the best 'unknown' I've seen. Have you ever thought of taking up racing professionally?"

This was the chance Rick had been waiting for.

"That's why I came here—to see you, sir," he explained rapidly. "I want to join your team. I'm dead keen."

"Have you done any racing?" Halliday asked quickly.

"Well, yes, all over the country," Rick admitted. "I've entered for novices' races and amateur races."

"He's won all he's entered for, too, Mr. Halliday," put in the race official. "He beat all comers. And he made that car he's driving, too."

"He did, eh," Halliday mused thoughtfully. "Now that's interesting. I wonder—" Rick held his breath. "I've half a mind to give you a trial, youngster. The way you bested that red car, in spite of its superior speed, was little short of wonderful. I saw what happened from here—"

"He only did it because the road narrows and he had the lead in the first place," cut in a malicious voice. "On a track it'd be a different matter. He's never raced against me on a track, Mr. Halliday, or the result would have been mighty different, believe me."

Rick turned his head quickly. Halliday and the official stared, frowning. For walking towards them from his car was Harry Marshall.

"Oh, so you're the chap who was driving the red racer," said Halliday, who wasn't too pleased at the interruption.

"Yes, I was, Mr. Halliday." Marshall was supremely sure of himself. He flashed a glance of dislike at the silent Rick. "I couldn't help hearing what you were saying, and I thought you should know the truth. I was coming here to ask you for a trial, too. I'm a professional. Denning here will tell you how successful I've been." He glanced at the track official, who nodded reluctantly. "If Rickson hadn't tried to crash me I'd have been here first."

"Crash you? That's the last thing I would do!" Rick protested indignantly. "I just took a chance, and it came off."

"You almost sent me into a spin." Marshall appealed to the famous driver. "Mr. Halliday, that young fool and his broken-down racer shouldn't be allowed on the road, let alone the track. They're a menace!"

"Now look here, Marshall—"

Rick had had enough. Fists clenched, he rose in his cockpit.

The pressure of Halliday's hand on his shoulder interrupted him.

"That's enough, youngster," said Halliday quietly. "You—" He looked at Marshall. "So you were coming for a trial too?"

"Yes, I was," nodded Marshall, with a quick contemptuous glance at Rick.

"All right." Halliday decided. "You shall have your trial—both of you. I am looking for a new driver. I warn you, though, I've put twenty or so other applicants through their paces so far and they haven't come up to scratch. Be here at nine o'clock to-morrow morning and I'll have two cars waiting for you. You'll race against one another, and the winner will be in the running for the job."

He patted Rick's shoulder and turned away.

Rick sank slowly back into the cockpit. He had a feeling that Halliday wanted to see him win. And he felt, too, that if he won, the job would be his. That he stood a chance of winning he was certain. He had bested the red racer once and was determined to do so again. But Marshall was watching him, a sneer on his cunning face.

"Nine o'clock to-morrow morning," Marshall said significantly. "I'll be there—but will you Raymond?

If you take my advice you'll not turn up to-morrow. You'll only look a fool. You don't stand a chance."

"That remains to be seen," observed the track official, who, like most people, disliked the bumptious young Marshall. "Now if you please—leave. You've no right here in the first place."

"I'm going, Mr. Denning," Rick said quietly and, pulling down his goggles, started his car's engine and let in the clutch.

But as he drove off, he was conscious of Marshall's sneering gaze following him. He was sure his rival would go all out in every way to prevent him winning to-morrow's vital race!

A TRAP FOR AN INTRUDER

NORTHLOCK was Rick's home town, and it lay 30 miles from Caldon, in the heart of the country. Rick arrived home an hour later in his car. His father, whom he helped in the garage, was waiting for him.

"Well, Rick, lad. How did you get on?" Mr. Raymond asked eagerly.

Rick smiled. He knew his father was proud of his prowess as a driver and only hoped he could justify it.

"I saw Halliday, dad, and he's going to give me a trial." Rick hoisted himself out of the car's cockpit. "But Harry Marshall was there and I just beat him to it. Was he mad! He got Halliday to promise to try him out, too. We're racing against one another to-morrow morning. And the winner will be in line for the job."

Rick's father took his pipe from his mouth and frowned.

"You be careful, Rick, lad. That Marshall's a tricky customer. I wouldn't trust him an inch. He's as crooked as his father's straight."

"I'll be watching him all right dad," Rick said grimly.

He and his father pushed the old racer into the shed which served as its garage. For some time afterwards, Rick was hard at work in the shed—and then up in his room at the house. After that, for the rest of the day, he helped his father in the garage. But Mr. Raymond insisted on him going to bed early to rest. Rick had to be in tip-top physical condition to perform well on the track next day.

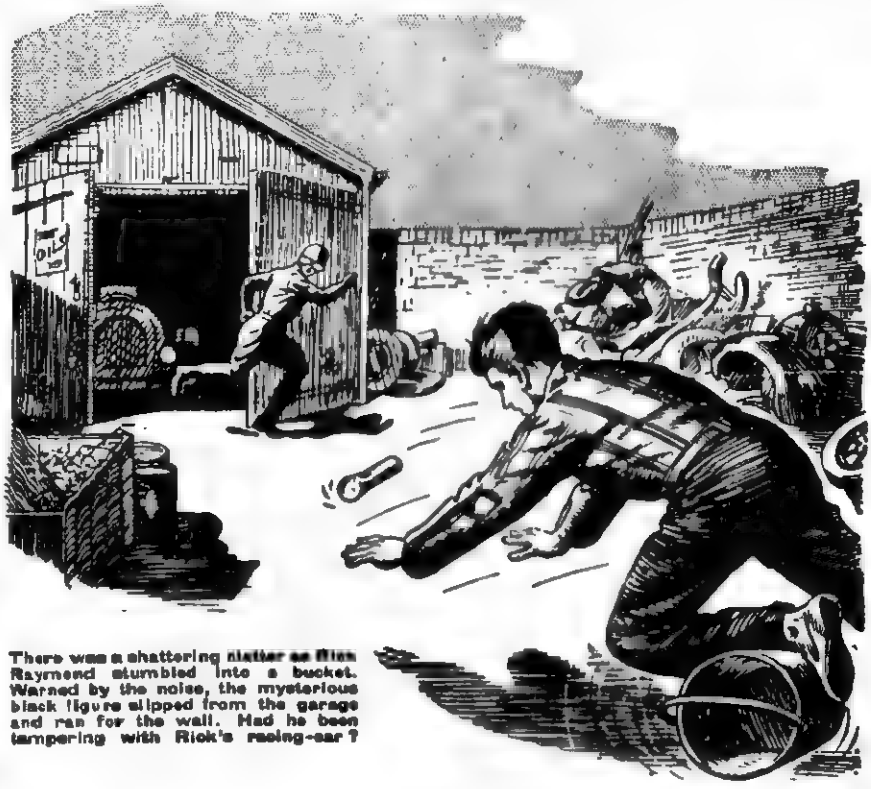
Rick slept well and had been asleep for some time when, all at once, he woke with a start. A bell was ringing loudly in his room!

With one movement he swung his legs out of bed.

"The warning bell!" he breathed. "Someone's broken into the shed!"

As he scrambled into his trousers, Rick thanked his stars that he'd taken the precaution of rigging up a trip-wire in the shed which garaged his racer. Connected to the bell in his room, it gave warning of an intruder.

Rick had realised that his racer was his only means of transport to Jim Halliday's race track, 30 miles away, as no buses or trains ran from the small country village of Northlock in the early morning. If Harry Marshall put Rick's car out of action by tampering with it, then Rick would be unable to turn up for the all-important race at nine the next day—and Marshall might easily fill the vacant place in Halliday's team of drivers!



There was a shattering clatter as Miss Raymond stumbled into a bucket. Warned by the noise, the mysterious black figure slipped from the garage and ran for the wall. Had he been tampering with Rick's racing-car?

Seizing a torch, Rick dashed downstairs and let himself out of the front door. It was dark outside—but Rick could just make out the doors of the shed. They were swinging open!

Someone must be there, inside the shed. Could it be Harry Marshall?

Cautiously, on tip-toe, torch clenched tightly in his hand, Rick stole across the yard. He could hear faint sounds from inside the shed.

Suddenly—

Cra-aa-ash!

Rick's foot caught the edge of a bucket, unseen in the darkness. Over it went and Rick, off balance, went with it, to sprawl on the ground.

There came a scurry of footsteps from inside the shed. Even as Rick scrambled groggily to his knees a dark figure clad in tight-fitting leathers and wearing flying helmet and goggles leapt through the doorway and ran for the wall surrounding the garage. He leapt, grabbed the top, and swung himself over before Rick could get to his feet.

Seconds later there was the sound of a car starting up—and roaring off into the distance!

Rick raced for the shed and dashed inside.

Everything was much as he left it. The racer stood in the same place. Nothing appeared to have been disturbed.

Rick went over to the car and examined it. He opened the bonnet and checked the engine. All right. He checked the controls. Nothing wrong there. He was just turning away, puzzled, when a tiny heap of something, lying on the concrete under the rear of the car, caught his eye!

It looked like white dust. Puzzled, Rick touched it with his hand. And then he stiffened.

"Oh, no!" he gasped.

Anxiously he turned to the petrol tank. Hand almost trembling, he unscrewed the filler cap and dipped a finger inside, drawing it round the edge. His finger met a gritty substance there could be no mistaking.

Someone had put sand in his petrol tank!

The sand would soon clog all the petrol filters and pipes and stop the engine.

"I can't possibly use the car now!" he muttered bitterly. "Marshall's done this to stop me reaching the track in time to-morrow, Halliday will think I've lost my nerve. If I hadn't set that alarm I might never have known what happened until long after Marshall had had his trial and perhaps got the job. Gosh, I'd like to get my hands on the scheming, low-down—"

He jumped as a hand fell on his shoulder.

"Got you!" cried a triumphant voice. "Now, you young rip, what d'you mean by messing about with my son's car?"

Rick turned swiftly.

"Dad, it's me! Rick!"

"What? Oh!" Mr. Raymond stood there, his usually jovial face red and angry. "Sorry, Rick. I heard you go out and guessed something was wrong. I thought that young Marshall might have been here."

"He has been, dad," Rick said grimly. "And he's put sand in the tank of the car!"

"What?" Mr. Raymond bristled. "The young hooligan! Just wait till I catch him. I'm going right over there now—"

He turned away, but Rick caught him by the arm.

"No, dad. It's no use!" he exclaimed. "We can't prove Marshall did it."

Mr. Raymond hesitated and then frowned blackly.

"No, I suppose you're right, Rick lad. But what're you going to do now How're you going to get to Caldon? My old car is in dock, with its engine stripped down, and if this one won't go we just can't afford to hire one. Money's a bit tight now."

Rick clenched his hands tightly. What his father said was true. There seemed no hope of getting to Caldon now. Had Marshall beaten him, after all?

Mr. Raymond was scowling at the racer.

"If we get that petrol tank off it'll take some time to clear it out, Rick, lad," he said glumly. "And then we've got to put it back again. We could take it out and put it back in time, I'm thinking. But the cleaning—"

"Of course! That's it!" Rick started, as an idea came to him. "Dad, we'll replace it with another petrol tank."

"Eh?" His father stared at him. "But we haven't got one!"

"That old racing one you were going to send for scrap!" Rick said breathlessly. "Oh, I know it's holed, but I can patch it up, if you'll help me, dad."

"It's a chance—and, by gum, we'll take it lad," burst out Mr. Raymond. "While you're fetching it, I'll get my tools."

Rick hurried out of the shed, and over to the scrap metal dump at the corner of the yard. The racing tank was still there, on top. It was holed, all right, but the holes were small and could, no doubt, be patched. But would he be able to do it in time?

"I've got to!" Rick muttered grimly. "The only chance of getting my own back on that schemer Marshall is to beat him on the race track!"

THE RACE OF THRILLS!

"RICK, it's eight o'clock. Are you and father ever going to be finished?" Mrs. Raymond, bustling into the shed with a tray of tea and sandwiches, frowning at her husband and son, toiling over the battered racing car.

Rick looked up, brushing the hair from his eyes with an oily hand.

"Eight o'clock?" he asked quickly. "Gosh! We'll do it, after all. Dad, give me that spanner, will you?"

Mrs. Raymond sighed and her husband handed over the spanner. She put down the tray and retired as Rick and his father went back to work.

It was twenty minutes later that Rick, with a sigh of relief, straightened his back.

"Done, dad! But I've not much time to get to the race track."

He gazed with satisfaction at the car as his father gathered up his tools. The new tank was a bit big, but they'd made it fit, somehow, working all night without a break.

He and his father had a quick meal of the sandwiches and the now cold tea. Then Rick had a quick wash, slipped on his driving togs and got behind the racer's wheel.

With a roar from its exhaust the car surged down the road—waves and cries of "Good luck, Rick!" from the boy racer's parents followed it out of sight!

The roads were deserted, and Rick pressed on as fast as he dared towards Caldon. The country roads were full of bends, and he began to feel that he would arrive too late at the race track.

But Rick's skilful driving saved him. Covering the 30 miles of winding roads in half an hour, he reached the track just as a nearby church clock struck nine.

Just inside the entrance was a big, red car with two figures beside it. Harry Marshall, in overalls, and Jim Halliday, whom he could not mistake even though he was wearing a grey suit.

Rick switched off the engine and glided up behind them silently.

He heard Marshall say .

"Doesn't look as if Raymond is going to turn up, Mr. Halliday. I'm not a bit surprised. On his own, against amateurs, I admit he's been successful. But he's not up to professional standard, like myself, and no doubt he realises it."

"He does, does he?!" Halliday's voice was slightly sarcastic. "Well, it's nine o'clock and he hasn't turned up. Frankly, I'm sorry. I thought that boy had the right stuff in him. You'll have to go round the track alone—"

"No, he won't, sir," Rick cut in quietly. "I'm here."

Halliday turned, a look of relief on his face.

"Right-ho! Come on, both of you," he said briskly.

He led the way to the pits. Rick's eyes shone as he saw the two superb green racers awaiting them.

"Here you are!" Halliday said. "One each. Four laps. I'll watch from the post."

Rick and Marshall climbed aboard, started the engines and steered the cars out of the pits, to where Halliday was standing. Stealing a glance at his rival as they waited for the signal to start, Rick saw his colour had faded and his lips were set in a straight line. Marshall, too, was out to win!

"But I'll beat him!" Rick vowed. "I'll be the one to join Halliday's team."

Jim Halliday's hand flashed down.

Brrr—rrr—rrr—rrmmm!

The two racers flashed forward.

Revving his engine to its peak, Marshall took the lead. And it was obvious he meant to stay there. Clinging tightly to the juddering steering-wheel, Rick streaked after his ruthless rival.

For the first time he felt a qualm of dismay. The car was new to him. It was much more powerful than his own little racer. But it was about as powerful as Marshall's own red racer. Marshall had started with a tremendous advantage.

The first bend came into view. Marshall took it at speed, but skidded badly at the corner. Rick took it cautiously, unsure of the power he had at his disposal. Down the straight he flashed, ten yards in Marshall's wake.

Marshall, for all his success, was an unsteady driver. He seemed to rely more on speed than skill, Rick realised. Had Halliday also realised that? Had he realised, too, that, if Rick beat Marshall, in this strange car, it would be proof of his own skill as a driver. Rick was suddenly sure he had.

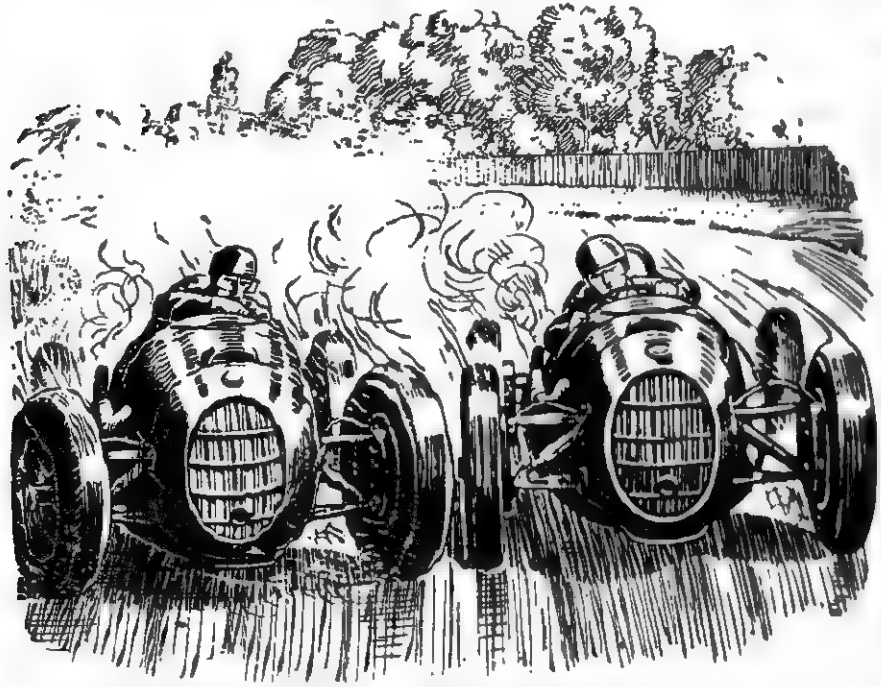
"And I've got to do it!" Rick breathed into the screaming wind.

He jammed his foot on the accelerator.

Marshall was taking the next bend. Again he went wide, skidding. Then Rick was abreast of it, turning. He felt his wheels skid. Like Marshall he was sliding across the track. Frantically he clung to the unfamiliar steering-wheel, wrenching it over with a force that set him slipping sideways in his seat.

Then he was round, screaming after Marshall, into the second lap.

But he was conscious now of a dull ache in his arms. His whole body throbbed. He was beginning to pay for his lack of sleep, caused by the scheming Marshall.



When they roared neck-and-neck into the sharp bend, Harry Marshall swung his car out at Rick's racer, attempting to force it off the track. The stop-at-nothing Harry was determined to win the trial at all cost.

Marshall twisted with almost a jump. Never had Rick seen anyone look so surprised.

"You!" Marshall gasped. "How—how did you get here?"

"Work it out!" Rick said grimly. "How would you get here, under the circumstances?"

He resisted the impulse to give Marshall the hiding he deserved there and then. The schemer's defeat on the racing track would be enough, he resolved.

Halliday, sensing the hostility, glanced from one to the other.

"Anything wrong?" he asked.

"Oh, just a little private quarrel, sir," Rick said calmly, stepping out of his car. "I'm sorry I'm so close to time. But something—er—went wrong with my racer."

He glanced meaningly at Marshall as he spoke. His rival's face was fiery red.

Halliday glanced at him, too, and frowned. Perhaps he guessed the truth.

Rick gritted his teeth. He tried to forget his tiredness. There was Marshall ahead—ten, twelve yards, perhaps. He glued his eyes on that other green car, forcing his every effort into the thought of beating it. The two racers were evenly matched. Only skill could triumph.

Another corner. Again Marshall went wide. The tail of his car waggled—just in time he straightened out. Then Marshall was through the bend.

This time Rick took a bend at speed. He was growing used to the car's power. He held the wheel steady. It was an effort. Every muscle seemed to shriek in protest. But his skid was slight. He went shooting after Marshall only eight yards in the rear.

The next corner he gained another three yards. He flashed by Halliday only five yards behind Marshall. A dull ache seemed to have settled in his body. His eyes, strained by gazing ahead, were heavy.

Rick continued to press his rival until, at the start of the fourth lap, he flashed by Jim Halliday with his bonnet dead level with Marshall's.

Marshall urged his racer to a greater speed. Instantly Rick responded, drawing level again. He saw Marshall's lips draw back from his teeth. The bend came in sight.

Rick, on the outside, slowed. He expected Marshall to attempt to force him out of the race—and he was right. Deliberately Marshall went into his greatest skid yet. Had Rick been beside him he would have been forced up the banking and off the track!

But Rick was not there. He cornered superbly behind Marshall and drew up beside the other racer at the start of the next straight. Bonnet to bonnet, wheel to wheel, they raced down the track.

Rick saw Marshall's look of rage and grinned breathlessly. He knew he could beat Marshall now. But he would have to watch for more foul tricks from his unsporting opponent.

His caution was rewarded. Suddenly he saw Marshall's bonnet closing in on his. Where a yard had separated them, there was now only two feet. The next bend came nearer, nearer. So did Marshall's wheel. And as he gained the bend, Marshall deliberately pulled over towards Rick's racer.

Rick saw hate in his face and knew Marshall was trying to crash him by forcing him off the track. But he was ready. Straight for the edge of the banked bend he steered.

Into the bend, his car tilting over at an angle. His offside wheels were bare inches from the outer edge of the track. Marshall's car swung at him—Rick pressed the throttle pedal to the floor—and shot ahead!

With Marshall's car skidding out of the bend, behind him, Rick thundered down the straight—and passed Jim Halliday, the winner of the exciting race.

Halliday had a mechanic with him now. But he left the man to go back to the pits and came running up as Rick braked.

"Marvellous! You're a champion in the making!" he exclaimed. "You took that last bend beautifully. Gosh, you've got a nerve of steel."

Then he whirled round and raced towards Marshall as he came up. He grabbed the white-faced driver by the collar, dragged him half out of his cockpit and shook him like a terrier shakes a rat. "I saw what you did, you young scoundrel! Trying to make Raymond here crash."

"I—I skidded! stuttered Marshall, terrified. "It was an accident!"

"Like putting sand into the petrol tank of Raymond's car?" snapped Halliday, his eyes flashing angrily.

Marshall gulped.

"But—How—how did you know?"

He broke off, realising he had given himself away.

Halliday thrust him back into his seat.

"Get out. Get off this track. And if I ever see you around here again, I'll give you the thrashing you deserve."

Marshall needed no urging. Rick, sitting in his cockpit, saw him scramble out and run for the red racer at the pits. He had had enough.

Rick smiled as Halliday came back. He was dog tired, but feeling on top of the world.

Halliday dropped a hand on his shoulder.

"I knew there was something wrong between you and Marshall when I saw you had a new tank on your car," he said quietly. "I got my chief mechanic to get in touch with your father, and he told him everything." The team leader grinned at Rick. "You're game, and a good driver. And that's just what I want from the new member of my race team, Rick."

"Gosh! You—you mean I've got the job!" gasped Rick.

Halliday chuckled.

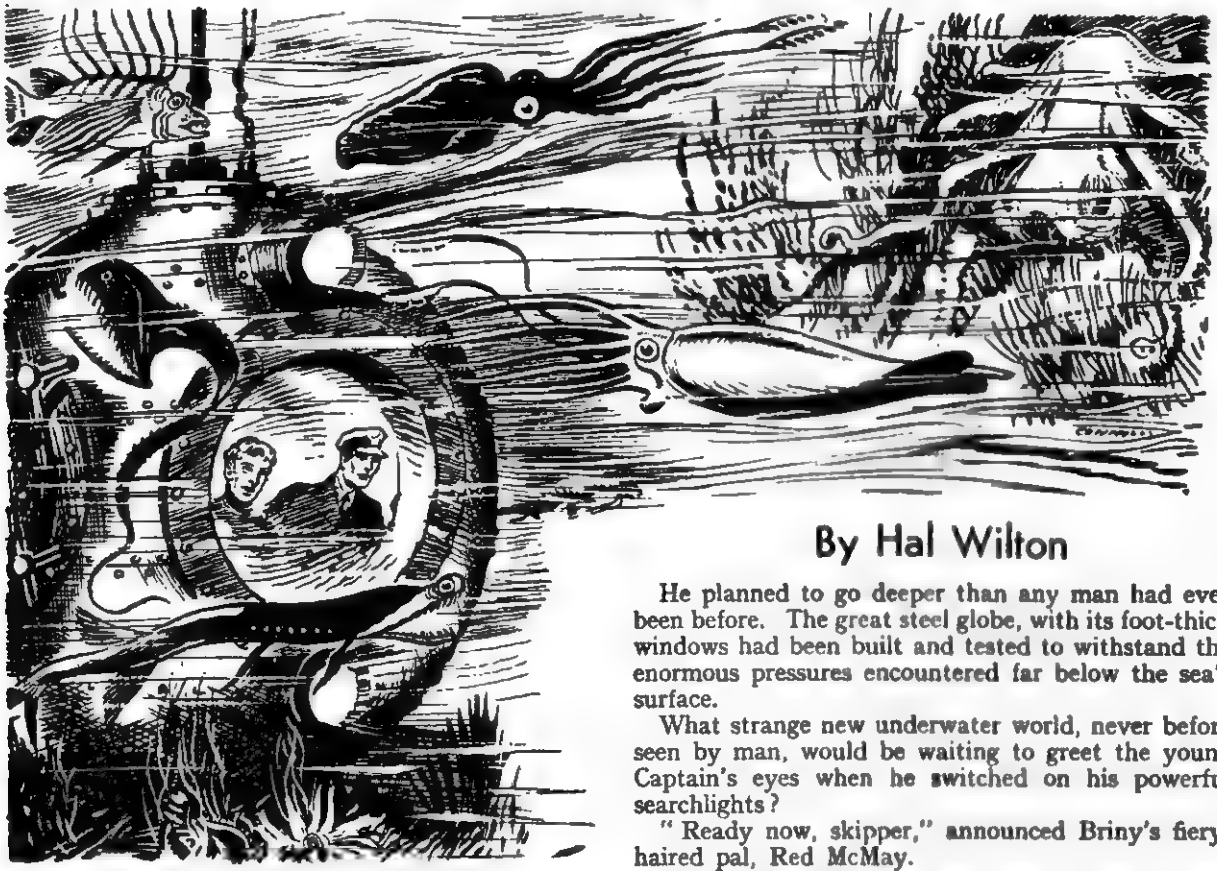
"That's right. Now come into the pavilion and we'll sign the contract."

With a whoop Rick scrambled out of the racer. At last he was on his way to speed fame!

ANSWERS TO "WORLD-WIDE QUIZ" (See Page 54)

1. To show where the road is when deep snow covers it.
2. The annual festival of "The Flying of the Kites."
3. An onion which has gone to seed.
4. Cobbles.
5. Twenty to three.
6. The trigger-guard.
7. A kop.
8. Breakers.
9. He has forgotten to put on his second spur.
10. A deer-stalker.
11. Arabic is written from right to left.
12. "A" is a cos lettuce.
13. The one who is bare to the waist.
14. The triangle.
15. Spinning the Plate or Turn the Trencher.
16. Top line—2, 9, 4. Middle line—7, 5, 3. Bottom line—6, 1, 8.

BRINY DEEP, UNDERSEA EXPLORER



By Hal Wilton

He planned to go deeper than any man had ever been before. The great steel globe, with its foot-thick windows had been built and tested to withstand the enormous pressures encountered far below the sea's surface.

What strange new underwater world, never before seen by man, would be waiting to greet the young Captain's eyes when he switched on his powerful searchlights?

"Ready now, skipper," announced Briny's fiery-haired pal, Red McMay.

Briny stepped into the great metal sphere. Carefully he checked the cable connections, the telephone line, the cylinders of compressed oxygen, and the switches and indicators on the control panels. The failure of any one of them might well be a matter of life and death once he and Red reached great depths.

After satisfying himself that everything was in order, he inspected the winding gear and checked the free running of the cable. Then he called together the members of the crew who were to operate the globe from the deck. He began firing questions at them to make sure that they understood what they had to do.

To the man in charge of the telephone he said:

"How often will you expect to hear from us?"

"Every five minutes."

"And if more than five minutes goes by and you hear nothing?"

"Check first to see whether the 'phone cable has broken."

"Supposing it hasn't broken?" asked Briny.

"I give the order to start pulling in straight away."

"Supposing the telephone line has broken?"

"I fall back on the reserve line. If that has gone, too, we bring you up to the surface."

BRINY'S PERILOUS JOURNEY

"ARE those cables ready for me to check yet?" A burly, rugged-looking young seaman, in sea-boots, black trousers, sweater and with a naval peaked cap placed squarely on his head, strode across the deck of the Pacific schooner. He rapped the question at a red-haired man in overalls.

"Give me another five minutes, Briny. We can't afford to make any mistakes on this job," pleaded the red-head, whose name was Red McMay.

Red squatted on the top of a huge metal globe which was waiting to be swung overboard and lowered into the sea. He whistled to himself as he adjusted the thick cables attached to the globe.

The big man who'd spoken to him was Captain John Deep. The Captain had earned a great reputation by pearl fishing, exploring, hunting pirates off Malaya, and battling typhoons with a trading schooner in the Caribbean. His friends in all the ports of the world had nicknamed him "Briny" Deep.

And now Briny was about to tackle his greatest ocean adventure of all. Having sampled almost every kind of experience on the surface of the sea, he was going down into the depths in search of new excitement.

Menaced by a Monster on the Bed of the Ocean

Briny gave a satisfied nod, and turned to the man at the cable drum, and pointed to two indicator dials, one of which told the length of cable paid out, and the other the amount of strain on the line.

"If the cable tightens and your dial reading shows too much strain, what will you do?" asked Briny.

"Assume that you are caught up somewhere, and pay out more slack to give you a chance to drift free."

"And if that doesn't work?" asked Briny.

"Notify the skipper, who will steam slowly in a circle to try to ease you off the obstruction."

Briny turned to Captain Carson, who commanded the schooner.

"That seems to take care of everything," he announced. "The top-side crew know their drill; we've done what we can to provide for possible trouble. But if anything goes wrong that we haven't been able to foresee, we'll have to rely on you to do your best to get us out of it."

Briny couldn't help ending with a breezy chuckle. It was the possibility of meeting some unexpected danger, as much as the excitement of going somewhere and seeing things that no man had ever seen before, that gave this expedition its big thrill.

He slapped Red McMay on the back.

"Come on, my hearty, let's go aboard," he suggested.

They climbed into the metal globe. The massive door was swung shut and closed tightly from the outside with huge screw clamps.

The globe could only be opened from the outside. This was a safety precaution, to guard against the accidental opening of the doors by the men inside while they were underwater, but it meant that they were prisoners until they were set free by the top-side crew.

The huge metal globe was swung over the side and lowered into the water. On deck the winches creaked as the cable and the telephone lines began to unwind.

As the undersea explorers sank down beneath the waves, the light, a pale green at first, turned to a steadily darker shade. Shoals of tiny fishes went flittering by, looking like darting grey shadows until Briny switched on the powerful searchlight, which suddenly showed them in all their brilliant colours of gold, crimson, blue-green and jet black.

The brilliant light attracted the fish like moths to a candle. A troup of queerly-shaped angel-fish, looking like painted sails, waggled up to examine the strange intruder.

Briny spotted them at first as a weird collection of pale gaping mouths on the fringe of the light. Then as they drifted nearer, the searchlight illuminated glittering rainbow colours on their bodies, until they had come right up to the thick glass of the windows and remained there almost motionless, staring in pop-eyed, and working their mouths as if they were smoking invisible cigars.

Suddenly, with a flash of colour, they all vanished.

"Gosh, what happened?" exclaimed Red.

"I think this explains it," replied Briny. "Look at this brute!"

A great sword-fish came hurtling into the beam of light, mad with anger at the invasion of its territory. Savagely it flung itself at the globe.

Briny and Red saw the cruel sword scrape across the window, heard it rattle against the metal wall.

Infuriated, the swordfish turned and charged again. This time the sword snapped off, and they saw it go swirling away in rage and panic.

An automatic warning light flashed on the control panel, telling Briny that five minutes had gone by and he hadn't yet reported to the schooner by telephone. He had been so fascinated by the scene that he had forgotten to keep an eye on the time.

"Everything going fine," he reported. "Keep paying out the cable."

The deeper they went the more curious became the shapes of the underwater creatures, which looked less and less like fish and more like nightmare monsters!

ATTACKED 3,000 FATHOMS DOWN

At a thousand feet the undersea explorers suddenly saw strange, ribbon-like creatures, five feet long, with lumpy heads and fearsome beak-like mouths. They drifted out of the darkness, stayed motionless for a while, rolling suspicious eyes at the blazing globe, and then, with a lazy rippling motion, glided away again.

"Parrot-fish," commented Briny.

So far, although they had seen a great deal that was fascinating and exciting, the pals had encountered nothing unexpected. The sea had already been well explored to greater depths than this, and its inhabitants were all well-known to scientists and zoologists.

An octopus lashed suddenly into the beam of the searchlight. It surged towards the undersea globe, and wrapped its tentacles round the hull, and flattened itself over the window, so that Briny could no longer see anything.

Suddenly a shuddering blow struck the globe. Briny and Red were both hurled to the floor.

Briny grabbed the telephone.

"Hold it! Stop the cable!" he order the men above. "We've hit something. I can't see what's outside. There's a darned great octopus plastered across the window—"

At that moment the octopus drew in its tentacles, startled perhaps by the sudden thud, and made off into the undersea darkness.

Briny went eagerly to the window, and then called eagerly to Red.

"Come and look at this!" he breathed.

They had come to rest on a ledge. Purple rock jutted out of a bed of sloping golden sand, across which marched great scarlet crabs. Lavender-coloured starfish, opening and closing like flowers, moved through a forest of coral and yellow sea-fans, while darting shoals of brilliantly coloured fish flashed through thickets of emerald and crimson seaweed which stood motionless in the water, for here, deep down, the sea was still, unaffected by the tides.

The five minute warning-light was blinking excitedly, but Briny was too interested to notice.

"It's amazing, Red," declared Briny. "Look at all that brilliant colour. Yet without our searchlight it's as black as pitch down here."

There was a gasp from Red.

He'd seen a sudden stirring in the sand. From it

sprouted a number of hideous black heads, rising on long, snake-like necks.

The watching pals were reminded of films showing the growth of plants. But these things weren't plants—they were undersea monsters, dwellers in the mud, black and eel-like, but as big as boa constrictors!

As the monstrous heads reared up, all the fish fled in terror, the crabs scuttling for crevices in the rocks. The starfish closed up.

The emergency telephone buzzer sounded fiercely, reminding Briny that he hadn't made contact with the top-side crew.

"What's happened down there?" cried an agitated voice.

"It's all right. We landed on a ledge," replied Briny. "Ask Captain Carson to move about half a mile further out, to get us into deeper water."

The undersea globe grated off the ledge, swung free again, and once more began its descent, away from the terrible, eel-like monsters.

Briny watched the dial which recorded the length of unreeled cable. A mile and a half. Two miles. The weight of water pressing down on them now was enormous. If anything in the structure of the globe gave way now they would be squashed flatter than a tin can under a steam-roller.

Briny gazed round anxiously for any signs of weakness, but he didn't give orders to stop unreeling the cable. He was determined to go deeper yet.

The eerie creatures which drifted round them now looked drab and grey. There were no more glittering colours.

Briny switched off the searchlight.

At once the scene underwent a transformation that brought a gasp from Red.

The black water was lit with a million glittering, swift-moving specks, for every creature carried its own light!

The creatures themselves were of fantastic shapes. Most of them had rows of jagged teeth. Some carried their phosphorescent lights on whip-like growths from the ends of their noses. Some appeared to have ragged legs instead of fins.

Swiftly Briny spoke into the telephone, reporting what he could see. Then, abruptly once again, as he had seen it happen twice before, came the alarm signal of the dark underseas. All the stranger creatures suddenly threshed around and sped away in a million spots of streaking light until all was still and dark.

Briny caught his breath.

The men on the schooner heard him say:

"There's something out there — something enormous—and it's watching us."

It was drifting nearer. The light that glittered all over its body was greenish and faint at first, but grew brighter as it came nearer, suspicious, wary and savage.

"It's a giant!" gasped Briny. "Bigger than any whale. Big as a submarine! Two rows of luminous teeth in a mouth as wide as a cave! If it attacks us—"

He left his remarks unfinished.

Captain Carson's voice came down over the wire.

"Briny! Do you want us to start pulling you in?"

"No, don't touch that cable!" rapped Briny. "It doesn't know what to make of us now, but if we move it'll go for us, and those teeth will tear the cables to shreds. We've got to stay perfectly still until it goes away. It's our only chance."

Time went by, Briny making his reports every five minutes, but still the underseas monster remained watching them.

Briny was tempted to switch the searchlight on, in the hope of scaring it off. But it was too much of a gamble. Frightening the lurking monster might only provoke it into making an attack, and that would mean disaster.

He glanced anxiously at the oxygen bottles. The dial told him that they had about an hour's supply left.

Then something happened which filled Briny with dismay.

A drop of water splashed on his face.

He looked up. Another drop of water was slowly oozing through the tightly-clamped rim of the hatch.

The hatch was beginning to leak!

The hatch had been made by engineers working to a precision of thousandths of an inch, so that it should fit perfectly. But under the enormous pressure of the water, the metal was slowly beginning to warp, squeezing open a little crack through which the water seeped.

Soon the drip would become a trickle, the trickle would become a steady stream. Then, any moment after that, the undersea globe would smash like an egg hit with a hammer.

"It's no good. The brute's still out there, but we daren't stay here any longer. We're beginning to leak," Briny reported to Captain Carson in the schooner miles above.

"We'll have to risk it. You must start to pull us up."

The moment the globe moved, the thing that Briny had feared, happened.

The monster pounced on the globe. The men on the top-side heard Briny yell.

"The brute's got us!"

The schooner rocked as if in the grip of a sudden gale. The moment Captain Carson saw the cable go taut, he let out a shout.

"Let the winch go!"

The winch handle spun. The drum roared. The whizzing cable smoked with friction.

In the depths far below the monster raced away with its jaws clamped round the top of the globe, unreeling the cable like mad.

Carson watched, with tense eyes, the racing of the needle which measured the length of cable unreeled.

When there was less than half-a-mile left, he saw the cable slacken. The monster, momentarily tiring, had stopped its mad rush through the bottom of the sea.

"Reel in!" yelled Carson. "Take up the slack."

His crew wound in about five hundred yards before the monster, feeling the tug on the cable, was galvanised into another mad burst of savage action.

Again the drum screamed and the cable unreeled as the maddened terror of the deep surged away with the globe.

Briny and Red, battered and bruised as they were hurled about inside the globe, realised what was happening. Carson was playing the monster as he would a shark that had swallowed bait!

He dared not pull the globe in, because with the added weight of the huge monster, fighting and tugging, the cable wouldn't stand up to the strain. He could only try to exhaust it so that it would leave go!

WHEN THE CABLES SNAPPED

BREATHLESS, his head swimming, Briny stared at the dial of the oxygen supply.

The battle had gone on for almost an hour. Their air was going fast and still the monster wouldn't release its hold. But if it wasn't beaten soon, Briny and Red would suffocate before they could be brought to the surface.

He dragged himself to the 'phone.

"Put Carson on," he panted to the schooner operator.

"We're doing all we can, Briny," came Carson's worried voice.

"We've only got one chance left," Briny panted. "You must pull us in as fast as you can."

Carson glanced at the dials which were registering the strain on the cable.

"The cable won't take the strain. That monster must weigh tons. The line'll break for sure," he protested.

"Risk it," commanded Briny grimly. "I've got an idea we can beat this monster if you pull us up quick enough."

On the schooner, Carson turned and nodded tensely to the men at the winch. The drum screeched, the electric motor squealed as they slapped on full power, the cable went bow-string tight and the threshing monster from the ocean bed battled against the mighty force that was trying to drag the globe from its terrible grasp.

Yard by yard the humming cable was reeled in, while mad, frenzied jerks by the undersea monster made the schooner reel.

Suddenly one of the crew let out a triumphant yell.

"It's free! The monster's let go of the globe!"

Carson saw the needle registering the tension suddenly flick back to zero. He rushed to the side, and saw that the trailing cable had gone slack. As he watched it being drawn in he uttered a shocked cry.

"Free! By thunder, it's broken. We've lost 'em."

There was a moment of stricken silence on deck as the crew stared at each other, each man seeing in his mind a picture of the helpless globe with its broken cable sinking into the inky depths. Three miles, four miles, five miles, until the tremendous pressure smashed it flat.

Then came a yell from the man at the telephone.

"The telephone lines are still O.K. I can hear Briny."

Carson rushed to the telephone.

"Briny, are you still all right?"

Briny, still far below the sea's surface in the globe, seemed cheerful.

"Fine, except that we're both beginning to get a little short of breath," he panted. "The monster's gone—just as I hoped. Hurry up and get us out of here. The air's getting low."

Carson clapped his hand over the mouthpiece, and turned to his men.

"Briny doesn't realise that the cable has gone. They're still hanging on by the two telephone wires, which are taking all the weight. There's an outside chance we may get 'em out before the lines snap."

"You gone to sleep up there?" yelled Briny.

"Listen, Briny, this may take a little longer than we figured," said Carson, trying to keep the anxiety out of his voice. "We're having a little trouble up here with the winch."

"Roger dodger," said Briny wearily. "But hurry up. Red and I are beginning to feel we've seen enough down here for to-day."

Almost inch by inch the schooner's crew reeled the telephone lines in. At any moment the lines might snap and the globe would plunge down to the bed of the sea.

Everyone watched in breathless anxiety. It seemed almost unbelievable, but the lines were holding.

The globe was coming up to the last few hundred yards now, but this brought fresh dangers. At greater depths the water was motionless. As the globe neared the surface it began to be tugged and battered by the swell of the waves, putting fresh tension on the frail lines.

Suddenly a cheer went up. Carson pushed his cap back and let out a gasp of relief. The top of the globe had appeared above the surface.

The globe was hauled aboard and the men rushed to unscrew the massive door.

At last Briny and Red climbed out, looking battered and exhausted.

"Thanks a lot, lads."

"We couldn't have stuck it many more minutes," panted Briny. "But what went wrong? You took a long time to haul in the cable."

"We lost the cable nearly half an hour ago," Carson told him grimly.

Briny whipped round, then he gasped. For the first time he realised that for the past half an hour Red's life and his own had been literally hanging by a thread.

"We must have got rid of the monster at the very moment the cable went," he declared. "The telephone lines would never have supported our weight and that brute's as well."

"What made the monster leave go?" asked Carson. "I still don't understand what you meant when you said pulling you in was the only chance. It seemed crazy to me."

"I was thinking about what happens to pilots if they try to fly into the stratosphere without pressure suits," Briny chuckled. "That monster was built to stand an enormous weight of water. I reckoned that if only we could get it up to a level where the pressure was light enough, it'd be in the same plight as an unprotected pilot in the stratosphere—and I was right. At the point where the cable broke, the monster blew up!"

Bravo, BALDU the BEAR!

By E. GEORGE COWAN

DURING THE REIGN OF ELIZABETH I, MARK JUSTIN AND HIS BROTHER SIMON WERE STAYING AT AN INN JUST OUTSIDE LONDON. THEY WERE TRAVELLING ENTERTAINERS AND ACROBATS, AND WERE ON TOUR WITH BALDU, THEIR PERFORMING BEAR

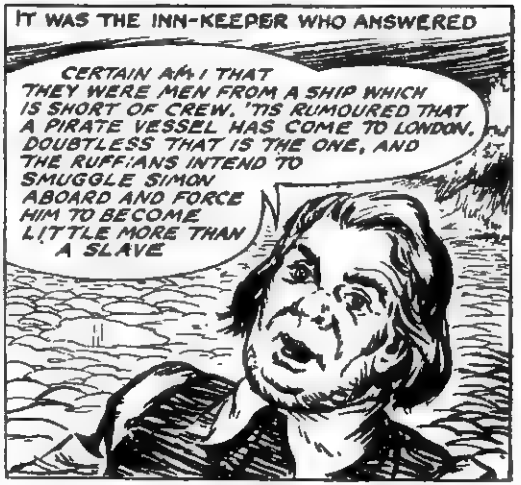
SIMON HAD GONE OUT FOR A STROLL, LEAVING MARK AT THE INN. SUDDENLY, HEARING ALARMED SHOUTS IN THE STREET BELOW, MARK DASHED TO THE WINDOW OF HIS ROOM

AS SIMON WAS BUNDLED INTO THE CART, MARK WENT SPRINGING FROM THE WINDOW IN A DETERMINED BID TO RESCUE HIM

THE DRIVER WHIPPED UP THE HORSES, AND THE SWAYING CART KNOCKED A PASSER-BY HEADLONG

BUT THE CART SPED ROUND A CORNER AND WAS LOST TO SIGHT. FURIOUS AND YET MYSTIFIED, MARK RETURNED TO THE PASSER-BY WHO HAD BEEN KNOCKED DOWN

IT WAS THE INN-KEEPER WHO ANSWERED


CERTAIN AM I THAT THEY WERE MEN FROM A SHIP WHICH IS SHORT OF CREW. 'TIS RUMOURED THAT A PIRATE VESSEL HAS COME TO LONDON. DOUBTLESS THAT IS THE ONE, AND THE RUFFIANS INTEND TO SMUGGLE SIMON ABOARD AND FORCE HIM TO BECOME LITTLE MORE THAN A SLAVE

NO BROTHER OF MINE SHALL SERVE ON A PIRATE SHIP! NEVER WILL I REST UNTIL I FIND OUT WHERE HE HAS BEEN TAKEN, SO THAT I MAY RESCUE HIM FROM THE CLUTCHES OF THOSE RUFFIANS!
BRAVELY SPOKEN! WE WILL TRACK THEM DOWN TOGETHER, AS SURE AS MY NAME IS TOM LACKLAND!
MARK TOOK AN INSTANT LIKING TO TOM, AND INTRODUCED HIM TO THE BROTHERS' PERFORMING BEAR
TOM, MEET BALDU! HE DESIRES TO SHAKE HANDS WITH YOU!
GOOD MORROW, FURRY ONE! METHINKS THE THREE OF US WILL PROVE MORE THAN A MATCH FOR ANY PIRATE'S HENCHMEN
WITHOUT DELAY, MARK, TOM AND BALDU THE BEAR SET OUT FOR THE PORT OF LONDON
MANY SHIPS LIE ANCHORED IN THE THAMES. 'TWILL BE NO EASY TASK TO FIND WHICH IS THE PIRATE
BUT FIND IT WE WILL -- AYE, AND FREE MY BROTHER, TOO
WHEN THE PALS REACHED THE CENTRE OF LONDON, HOWEVER--
ZOUNDS! THE RIVER IS CROWDED WITH SHIPPING, MARK. ANY MIGHT BE THE PIRATE!
AND TO THINK THAT MY BROTHER IS BEING HELD CAPTIVE ON ONE OF THEM!
ABOARD THE PIRATE SHIP MARK'S BROTHER WAS DRAGGED BEFORE ITS VILLAINOUS CAPTAIN
HERE'S ANOTHER FINE YOUNG STRIPLING TO SAIL WITH YE, CAP'N
HE'S A STRONG 'UN. ON ME OATH, YE SHOULD PAY WELL FOR HIM

THE PIRATE CHIEF WAS KNOWN AS IRONHOOK. HE GRINNED EVILLY AS HE LOOKED SIMON UP AND DOWN
AYE! HE'S A WELL-MADE LAD--JUST RIGHT TO SERVE BENEATH THE SKULL AND CROSSBONES WITH IRONHOOK. TAKE THE SWAB BELOW, AND FIND ME ANOTHER TWO LIKE HIM. THEN WE'LL BE READY TO SAIL
LATER, IRONHOOK'S HIRELINGS RETURNED TO DOCKLAND TO SEARCH FOR MORE VICTIMS. BY A STROKE OF LUCK THEY WERE SEEN BY MARK
TOM! YON MAN WITH THE PATCH! I RECOGNISE HIM! 'TIS ONE OF THE RUFFIANS WHO BORE SIMON AWAY. HE WILL KNOW WHICH SHIP IS THE PIRATE. WE'LL FORCE THE TRUTH FROM HIM
MARK WATCHED THE MEN DRINKING OUTSIDE AN INN
WE MUST GET PATCH-EYE ALONE. LISTEN CAREFULLY, TOM. I HAVE A SCHEME TO SEPARATE HIM FROM THE OTHERS
MARK AT ONCE BEGAN A PERFORMANCE WITH HIS BEAR, WHILE TOM TOOK A COLLECTION
GOOD SIRS, SPARE A GROAT FOR THE SHOW WE GIVE
GET ON WITH IT, KNAVE. YE'LL EARN A BROKEN HEAD IF THE ENTERTAINMENT IS POOR
BALDU'S ANTICS SOON HAD THE RUFFIANS ROARING WITH HOARSE LAUGHTER
HEH! HEH! HEH!
BY MY FAITH, THE BEAR'S AS TAME AS A KITTEN
THE ACROBAT IS A WELL-MUSCLED KNAVE
THE STURDY BUILD OF MARK AND TOM HAD NOT ESCAPED PATCH-EYE
THEY'LL GET NO GROAT FROM US. BUT THEY'D MAKE GOOD CREW FOR IRONHOOK, EH?
THEY WOULD, FORSOOTH. WHEN THE PERFORMANCE ENDS, WE'LL SEIZE THE FOOLS. I'LL PASS THE WORD TO THE REST OF OUR MEN

MARK'S NEXT MOVE WAS TO BUY A JAR OF HONEY FROM THE INN-KEEPER
IT SEEMS PATCH-EYE IS MAKING PLANS ALSO. BUT I SHALL STRIKE FIRST!

SUDDENLY MARK APPEARED TO TRIP, AND~~
UGH! YE CARELESS SWAB!
'TIS A WILY SCHEME OF MARK'S. NOW I FREE BALDU~~ THE BEAR DOES THE REST

THE BEAR LOVED HONEY, AND AS HE DIVED TOWARDS IT~~
LOOK OUT! THE BEAR HAS GONE MAD!
THE BRUTE IS LOOSE AND ATTACKS!
HELP!

IN THE CONFUSION NO ONE NOTICED MARK RACE AFTER PATCH-EYE
LUCK IS WITH ME. THE INN IS EMPTY--AND THE CUR SEEKS TO SAVE HIMSELF FROM BALDU. 'TIS THE CHANCE FOR WHICH TOM AND I PLANNED

MARK HURLED HIMSELF AT HIS MAN AND THRUST HIM FORWARD
PLAGUE TAKE YOU! LET ME GO! A BEAR'S LOOSE!
YOU WHITE-LIVERED CUR! YOU TOOK MY BROTHER THIS MORNING. ON WHICH SHIP IS HE? LOOSEN YOUR TONGUE OR I'LL THROW YOU RIGHT IN THE BEAR'S PATH!

PATCH-EYE TREMBLED WITH FRIGHT
LET ME GO! THE MAD BEAR DRAWS NEARER! THE VESSEL~~IS THE CURLEW, OFF WAPPING. 'TIS THE CRAFT OF THE PIRATE, IRONHOOK

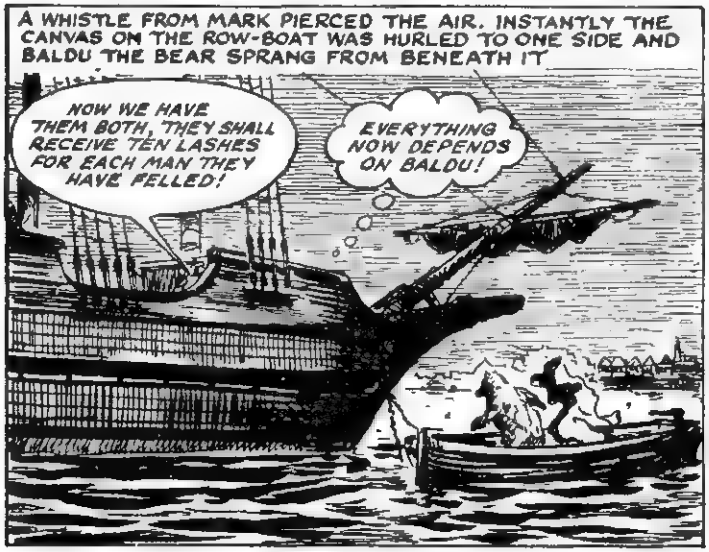
AS MARK LOOSED HIS GRIP, PATCH-EYE WHIRLED SAVAGELY
YOU'LL NEVER LIVE TO BOARD THE CURLEW!
MARK'S SPEED SAVED HIM
MARK WORKED FAST. AND WHEN TOM CAME TO THE INN DOOR---
ALL'S WELL, TOM! I MADE PATCH-EYE SPEAK. NOW WE'LL DUMP HIM IN THE CELLAR
WE MUST HURRY, FOR THE EXCITEMENT IS DRAWING A CROWD!
HAVING HIDDEN PATCH-EYE OUT OF SIGHT SO THAT HE COULDN'T WARN HIS MATES ABOUT MARK, THE PALS MADE OFF AT TOP SPEED
A BEAR'S LOOSE!
ARM YOURSELVES!
HEAD FOR WAPPING, TOM. MY BROTHER IS CAPTIVE ON THE CURLEW--VESSEL OF THE NOTORIOUS PIRATE IRONHOOK
ONCE AT WAPPING, IT DIDN'T TAKE THEM LONG TO LOCATE THE CURLEW
WE'LL USE THIS BOAT TO ROW OUT TO THE PIRATE. 'TWILL MEAN DIRE PERIL—BUT BROTHER SIMON MUST BE RESCUED. BY ST. GILES, THAT CANVAS IN THE STERN GIVES ME AN IDEA!
IT WAS SOME TIME LATER THAT THE PALS SET OFF ON THEIR PERILOUS MISSION
BY NOW PATCH-EYE'S FRIENDS WILL HAVE MISSED HIM AND REPORTED BACK TO THE SHIP. 'TIS CERTAIN WE'LL NEVER BOARD HER BY SURPRISE
AYE, THE LOOK-OUTS WILL BE WATCHFUL BUT FEAR NOT, TOM. WE HAVE A SECRET ALLY!

ABOARD THE CURLEW, IRONHOOK AND BLACKBEARD WATCHED THE PALS APPROACH
'SBLOOD, 'TIS THE VERY TWO YOUTHS WHO ESCAPED US!
BY ME HOOK, 'TWOULD SEEM FORTUNE SMILES ON US. THE CREW WE SEEK COMES SEEKING US

MARK REACHED THE DECK AND FACED THE PIRATE CHIEF BOLDLY
I HAVE COME FOR MY BROTHER, WHO WAS KIDNAPPED BY YOUR MEN. HAND HIM OVER AT ONCE!

BY THUNDER -- THE STRIPLING MUST BE MAD! THROW HIM INTO THE BOWELS OF THE SHIP--AND HIS COMPANION, TOO. WHEN WE HAVE TAMED THEM THEY WILL COMPLETE OUR CREW -- AWAY WITH THEM!

THOUGH THEIR POSITION SEEMED HOPELESS, THE CHUMS FOUGHT FURIOUSLY
I SEE TOM'S OVERPOWERED, I DARE NOT DELAY MY PLAN ANY LONGER


A WHISTLE FROM MARK PIERCED THE AIR. INSTANTLY THE CANVAS ON THE ROW-BOAT WAS HURLED TO ONE SIDE AND BALDU THE BEAR SPRANG FROM BENEATH IT
NOW WE HAVE THEM BOTH, THEY SHALL RECEIVE TEN LASHES FOR EACH MAN THEY HAVE FELLED!
EVERYTHING NOW DEPENDS ON BALDU!

BALDU DID NOT FAIL HIS MASTER
A BEAR! A BEAR! IT'S CLIMBING ABOARD!

AN AVENGING FURY, BALDU LAUNCHED HIMSELF AT THE STARTLED PIRATES
SEIZE THEM, BALDU!
HE IS FIGHTING MAD! 'TIS SMALL WONDER THE RUFFIANS CRY OUT IN FEAR
SEIZING THEIR CHANCE, MARK AND TOM SNATCHED UP SWORDS AND STRUCK OUT MANFULLY
HELP BALDU TO KEEP THEM AT BAY, TOM, I'LL GO BELOW DECK AND SEARCH FOR BROTHER SIMON
MARK FOUND A BARRED DOOR, OPENED IT, AND OUT RUSHED A BATCH OF PRISONERS -- INCLUDING SIMON!
YOU, MARK! BY ST. GILES, I NEVER THOUGHT 'TO SEE YOU AGAIN
HURRY! YOU AND THESE OTHERS, GET SWORDS FROM THE ARMOURY. BALDU AND A LOYAL FRIEND ABOVE ARE FIGHTING FOR THEIR LIVES!
EAGERLY THE PRISONERS OBEYED
PLAGUE TAKE IT, THE PRISONERS ARE LOOSE! STRIKE TO KILL -- AND SET SAIL BEFORE ALL LONDON IS ROUSED! 'TIS THE GALLOWS FOR US, SHOULD IT BE DISCOVERED WE'RE PIRATES!
AT 'EM, LADS!
MARK AND HIS COMRADES FOUGHT GRIMLY. BUT THEY WERE SO OUTNUMBERED THAT THE BATTLE GRADUALLY WENT AGAINST THEM
MARK! MARK! WE CANNOT HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER!
THE LIGHTED LANTERN ABOVE HIS HEAD GAVE MARK AN IDEA
METHINKS THIS MAY TURN THE TABLES!

AS THE OIL SPILT, A SHEET OF FIRE ROSE UP TO THE SAILS
SLASH THE ROPES! BRING THE CANVAS DOWN ON TO THE FLAMES!
IRONHOOK AND HIS MEN BECAME FILLED WITH PANIC
'SBLOOD! THE WHOLE SHIP WILL SOON BE ABLAZE! TRY TO SAVE HER BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
WHILE THE PIRATES FOUGHT THE FIRE, MARK AND HIS PARTY ESCAPED TO THEIR BOAT
GOOD OLD BALDU- THE LAST TO LEAVE THE SHIP, AND MARK WITH HIM! METHINKS IRONHOOK WILL RUE THE DAY HE TOOK YOU FOR HIS CREW, SIMON
THE PIRATE SHIP WAS DOOMED. WHILE NAVAL CRAFT SPED UP TO INVESTIGATE, IRONHOOK AND HIS MEN WERE FORCED TO ABANDON SHIP
A DEAFENING EXPLOSION SPELLED THE END OF THE CURLEW
THERE SHE GOES! THANKS TO BALDU AND TOM, WE HAVE RESCUED SIMON - AND HAVE RID THE SEAS OF A PIRATE
AND THANKS TO YOU, TOO, MARK!
HURRAH!

A TRAITOR AT FORT TUREZZO!

WANTED—WATER!

By John Barnes

MART FABER, private first-class of the French Foreign Legion, peered between the sunbaked battlements of Fort Turezzo and passed a dry tongue across his cracked and blackened lips. Half a mile away across the golden sands of the desert lay a splash of green—the oasis of Tukra.

Beside Mart squatted Pierre Durand, his back propped against the battlements and his long legs stretched out on the wide rampart which ran all round the fort. At various points round the rampart wall a total of some thirty legionnaires stood on watch, with their rifles, or lay trying to snatch a few minutes of precious sleep.

The big square courtyard below was empty except for the figure of Colonel Latour, commander of the little garrison. He was making his way to one of the three broad flights of steps which led up to the ramparts.

"That oasis looks greener than ever to-day, Pierre," Mart croaked huskily.

Pierre looked up, and his white teeth flashed in a wry smile

"True, mon ami," he said. "It is a day since we were issued with our last spoonful of water, and now there is no more. So to-day the oasis looks greener—and it seems to be further away!"

Mart nodded grimly. At this moment the desert seemed empty, as if there were nothing to stop the legionnaires going out to bring water from the oasis. But beyond the high sand dunes to the north and west, watchful eyes were upon Fort Turezzo.

El Cassim the Renegade and his Arabs were encamped beyond the dunes, and they outnumbered the little garrison of the fort by six to one.

Twice El Cassim had launched attacks on the fort, and twice the Arabs had been beaten back after a desperate fight. But now the crafty leader of the renegade band was prepared to bide his time, for he knew that soon the legionnaires would be defeated by that most deadly of enemies—thirst!

"In five years of soldiering together, Pierre," said Mart slowly, "this is about the toughest spot we've been in. There's a company marching to relieve us, but unless we get water they'll be too late. The fort will fall into Arab hands."

Pierre knew what his friend meant. The men of the Legion were used to facing danger, and they counted their lives lightly. To these grim, hardy legionnaires, the fact that they might be wiped out was no more than the fortunes of war. But that Fort Turezzo might be captured by El Cassim's men was a disaster.

This fort was a vital outpost, and once the Arabs were in control, well-stocked with supplies of water,

Pals in the Foreign Legion Foil a Cunning Arab Plot

to re-take it would require more strength than the legion could well afford—far more than a single company.

"Pierre," said Mart after a long pause, "it might just be possible for two men to slip out at night and bring back a couple of goat skins of water—enough to keep us going for another few days."

"For any two men, it would be impossible," grinned Pierre, with a flourish of his hand. "But for you and I, mon ami, it would not be entirely hopeless!"

At that moment Colonel Latour came along the rampart wall and halted beside them. His tough, leathery face wrinkled in a faint smile.

"Well, mes enfants," he said in a cracked voice, his throat parched. "After all this time, do you begin to regret that you joined the Legion?"

"To regret is useless, my Colonel," said Mart, snapping to attention with a grim twinkle coming into his blue eyes. "It is action, not regret, which may save us! Durand and I wish to volunteer for a night sortie to the oasis, to fetch water!"

Colonel Latour's eyebrows shot up.

"A night sortie?" he exclaimed. "But you cannot succeed! You will be taken by El Cassim's men! And in their hands you will die very unpleasantly! Ma foi! It is better to die a swift, clean death making a last stand for the fort!"

"Thirst is not a swift death, my Colonel!" said Mart hoarsely. "If the sortie succeeds, the whole fort will be saved. If it fails—well, Durand and I have nothing to lose but our lives!"

"A pretty thought," said the Colonel grimly. "But not even death by thirst is slower or more terrible than death under the knives of El Cassim's Arabs."

"We choose to take the risk, my Colonel!" Mart said softly, and Pierre nodded, his dry lips opening in a mirthless smile.

Colonel Latour surveyed the two lean, tough soldiers. If any men could succeed in this wild gamble, he thought, it was these two.

"You have fought under my command for a long time, mes enfants, and now you ask me to send you to a terrible death," he said at last in a tired, hopeless voice. "Well, so be it! It is your own wish! And—may good luck go with you!"

Within a matter of minutes every man in the little garrison knew that after dark Mart Faber and Pierre Durand would take the thousand-to-one chance of a night sortie to bring in water. It was half-an-hour later when Mart turned from the battlements to find a dark, swarthy-faced legionnaire named Kahlek by his side. Kahlek was a strange silent man. What his nationality was, nobody knew— and in the Foreign Legion no questions were asked.

"I am to come with you tonight," said Kahlek in his harsh voice with its odd accent. "I have spoken with the Colonel."

"No!" said Mart brusquely, making no attempt to hide his dislike for Kahlek. "Pierre and I work better on our own."

"It is the Colonel's order," insisted Kahlek with a shrug. "Three men can carry more skins of water than two. Also, I will bring you luck. The desert and the Arabs shall never claim Kahlek's life! It is against the stars which guide my fate! Remember the Deir el Kubra patrol?

Mart remembered well enough. A few weeks earlier a patrol of the Legion had been caught in the open desert by El Cassim and his men. They had been wiped out with the exception of one man—Kahlek! He had been left for dead, and had escaped to safety later.

"Don't fancy you bear a charmed life, just because you were lucky once!" said Mart. "We don't want you on this sortie, Kahlek!"

"I have spoken with the Colonel," repeated Kahlek. "Now he has given this order—that I should go with you. There is no argument!" He turned away, pacing slowly along the rampart.

"I do not like this Kahlek," said Pierre, who had been listening to the exchange. He rubbed his chin thoughtfully, and added: "At Deir el Kubra he was lucky—almost too lucky. I do not like—or trust him!"

THE TRAITOR'S PLOT

DARKNESS hung like black velvet over the desert. Mart lay behind a little ridge of sand twenty yards from the fringe of the oasis. For ten minutes he had been watching for some sign of movement among the trees, and he had glimpsed two Arab guards.

Stealthily he wriggled back a few yards to Pierre and Kahlek.

"I think there are only two guards," he breathed. "They are in the shadow of the big palm to the right of the oasis. Pierre—you and I will crawl in together and silence them! Kahlek will wait here with the water-skins."

Mart opened the flap of the holster at his belt.

"No shooting unless we have to fight our way out, Pierre!" he whispered. "A single shot will bring El Cassim's men down upon us! And now let's go!"

Edging forward on their stomachs, the two friends began to move across the sand. Their speed was painfully slow, but they were old campaigners who knew the value of patience.

Five minutes later they were at the fringe of the trees, and could hear the guttural voices of the two Arab guards only a few yards away on the far side of a tall palm. Like shadows the legionnaires rose and glided stealthily forward.

And then a sharp, exultant voice sounded behind them!

"Stand still, mes amis! And do not try to draw your guns!"

It was Kahlek! And his voice slashed through the night air like the crack of a whip!

Mart and Pierre whirled round, and a fierce, bitter exclamation burst from Pierre's lips.

"Name of a dog!" he hissed. "Treachery!"

Kahlek stood three paces away, crouched tensely, and levelling a pistol at Mart and Pierre! Moonlight glinted on his black eyes as they flickered from one to the other of the two friends.

From beyond the palm there came a sudden excited gabble of words and a cry of surprise. The two Arab guards came running forward, their rifles at the ready.

Mart felt a surge of fury sweep through him.

"You traitorous dog, Kahlek!" he gritted, and his muscles bunched ready to spring.

"If you move a finger," snarled Kahlek, "I will shoot your friend dead! And, Durand—stand still! Or it will be Faber who dies first!"

Mart and Pierre froze motionless, each helpless under that threat of death to the other! Without taking his eyes from them, Kahlek rapped out some curt phrases in fluent Arabic to the two Arab guards. They stopped short, seemingly astonished for the moment. Then, grinning and chuckling, they turned and took the revolvers from the holsters of Mart and Pierre.

"These renegades seem to be friends of yours, Kahlek!" Mart rasped savagely.

"But of course, stupid one!" came the mocking reply. "I am a good friend of El Cassim! How else do you think it was that he trapped the Deir el Kubra patrol? How else do you think it was that I alone survived? Yes! It has been useful to El Cassim to have a friend in the Legion! And he pays me well!"

"You black-hearted cur!" Mart gritted.

"A well-paid cur!" taunted Kahlek. "And I have to thank you, stupid Englishman! I had been wondering how I could get out of Fort Turezzo so that I could suggest to El Cassim a clever little plan! Your idea of making a night sortie for water gave me my chance—and I have taken it!"

Pierre was gazing at Kahlek with fury in his eyes.

"For this, Kahlek," he said in a voice like cold steel, "you will die before a firing-squad of the men who were once your comrades!"

"It is unlikely," said Kahlek coolly. "And now, mes amis—march! El Cassim will be pleased to see me!"

The tents of the renegade band were scattered in a wide hollow beyond the dunes. In the largest tent, its floor carpeted with skins and hides, El Cassim surveyed the prisoners and the traitor who had captured them. The light from a lamp hanging from the centre of the tent gleamed on the cruel, hawk-like feature of the Arab leader.

Mart and Pierre stood before him, their hands bound tightly in front of them with leather thongs.

"You have done well, Kahlek!" said El Cassim. "But for you, these infidel dogs might have succeeded in their plan to get water—and then Fort Turezzo could have held out against us until the relief company arrived!"

"I have a plan, O El Cassim," said Kahlek, grinning wolfishly. "In two hours, I will return to the fort. I will say that these two went on ahead to the oasis to silence the guards—and that they did not return. I will pretend that I heard the sounds of struggle, and that I waited on in the hope of getting to the oasis myself—but that more guards came down from your camp, and so I was forced to return empty-handed."

"It could have happened so," nodded El Cassim. "But why should you return to the fort? They are without water, and soon Fort Turezzo will be mine!"

"The Legion does not surrender," returned Kahlek. "Sooner than yield up the fort to you, they will set explosives in the walls, and make a crumbling, useless ruin of it, even though they die themselves in doing so! But I have a plan to beat them!"

There had been two prisoners—but now there was only one. "Where is your friend?" gasped the Arab guard. Pierre roared with laughter—knowing that the Arab was due for another big surprise!

"Speak!" said El Cassim, leaning forward eagerly.

"I will return to the fort," said Kahlek. "At dawn, your men must be prepared for battle, and they must watch from beyond the dunes. I will set a fuse to blow up the ammunition store which lies beneath the courtyard! It will not ruin the fort, but it will cause great turmoil and confusion! In that moment, when the explosion comes, your men must burst from hiding. It will be easy for me in all the upheaval to open the gates! The rest will be simple for you!"

"Ha! A worthy plan!" cried El Cassim, leaping to his feet. "You will be well rewarded, Kahlek!"

"Aye!" nodded Kahlek. "But your men must wait patiently for the signal. From dawn onwards they must be ready, but I shall have to choose my time carefully. So it may be that the sun will have risen high before the explosion!"

"A few hours matter nothing!" cried El Cassim. "And now—what of these infidel jackals? Shall I have them put to the knife without delay?"

Kahlek rubbed his chin and grinned cruelly.

"Nay, El Cassim," he said. "Assuredly they must die. But first I would have them witness the fall of Fort Turezzo and the defeat of their comrades!"

Mart glared at the traitor. Everything seemed so hopeless. But if he saw the slightest chance to foil Kahlek's plan he would take it!

MART'S VANISHING TRICK

MART and Pierre lay on the soft, shifting sand in a small square tent. It was pitched against a rising hump of rock on the edge of the encampment. From time to time they could hear the pad of feet on the sand as the Arab set to guard them prowled up and down outside.

There was a lamp in the tent, hung there so that the sentry could see the prisoners clearly whenever he glanced in.

"I want only one thing," Pierre was saying in a soft, fierce voice. "Before they kill me to-morrow, I hope they will cut these thongs from my hands—and I hope that when my hands are free, Kahlek will be within reach!"

"I'd sooner have our hands free now," murmured Mart grimly. "We might stand a chance of getting away then. That Arab guard has got a knife in his belt."

His voice trailed away, and he struggled to a sitting position. Then he began to push at the loose sand with the heel of his boot.

"Pierre!" he whispered, and there was sudden eagerness in his voice. "Remember the old Arab trick we worked that time when we were hemmed in at the Gabra oasis? They closed in and found we'd vanished?"

"I remember," said Pierre in a low voice, "but that is of no use now."

"It might be if we work it right!" muttered Mart. "That Arab's been too wary to let one of us get behind him, but we might be able to trick him!"

He went on speaking in a whisper, explaining his plan, and slowly a grin creased Pierre's lean dark face.

Silently they set to work, scooping up the sand in their bound hands to make a long, shallow trough in the floor of the tent. For half-an-hour they worked steadily, and at last Mart was satisfied. He lay down in the trough, and Pierre began to cover him with loose sand, working from the feet up and spreading the sand smoothly and evenly.

When Mart was buried up to the chest, Pierre paused. Fumbling awkwardly, he found a scrap of paper in his pocket and contrived to roll it into a thin, tube-like spill.

"Here, mon ami," he whispered, placing one end of the little paper tube between Mart's lips. "It will not be for long!"

Mart nodded, and flashed his friend a wink. Then he lay back and allowed Pierre to spread a grimy handkerchief over his face so that it covered his nose and eyes.

With quick movements, Pierre began to scoop more of the soft sand over his friend, covering the chest, the neck, the head.

Five minutes later, the task was finished. All the surplus sand had been pushed to the edges of the tent and spread evenly. There was no sign of Mart. He lay buried in that shallow hollow, with the sand spread smoothly over him, breathing through the spill of paper which protruded no more than an inch above the surface.

Pierre glanced round and nodded. Then he chose his position carefully, and squatted down against the side of the tent within a short distance of Mart's hidden feet. Softly Pierre began to chuckle. The chuckle grew louder, until at last the sound of his laughter could be clearly heard outside the tent.

The flap was jerked aside, and the bearded, fierce-eyed Arab guard stooped to enter.

"Why do you laugh, dog—?" he began, then broke off to stare blankly. His mouth fell open in a gape as he realised that one of the two prisoners had vanished completely! It seemed like magic. And there was the other prisoner—laughing. The Arab strode forward, looming over Pierre.

"Where is your friend? Speak, infidel!" he burst out. "Speak! Or by the Prophet my knife shall make you!"

Pierre, still laughing, looked up to hold the Arab's eyes. Behind the Arab, the sand was moving; heaving upwards.

Mart rose to a sitting postion from the hollow and lunged forward. His bound hands grasped the Arab's ankle from behind, and he jerked backwards with all his strength.

It all happened so swiftly that the man had no time to feel the first impact of surprise. His feet were jerked from under him, and he fell forward. Pierre was ready, and his bound hands swept upwards, fists clenched, to crack home in a terrible two-handed uppercut beneath the Arab's chin as he fell.

With a strangled grunt the Arab crumpled sideways and lay limp.

Mart was on one knee, shaking the sand from his head as he fumbled for the knife in the Arab's belt. A few seconds later he was cutting through the leather thongs which bound Pierre's hands.

"My knuckles will hurt for a very long time, I think," murmured Pierre with a grim smile. "But I have no regrets!"

"Listen, Pierre," Mart jerked out as his friend took the knife and began to cut him free, "by dawn at the latest, El Cassim will know that we've escaped. If he thinks we've got back to the fort, he will know that Kahlek's plan cannot go through. But I want Kahlek to put his plan into operation. We will see that it does not succeed. Cassim must be tricked into thinking that we've escaped in the opposite direction! Now, this is what we'll do—"

Ten minutes later there was a sudden stir in the Arab encampment. The horses which had been safely picketed, were prancing and neighing in sudden confusion. Some scattered shots rang out, and there was an outburst of shouting. Then, with a thud of hooves two of the horses thundered away across the desert with a rider crouched low in each saddle.

El Cassim came striding from his tent in fury, and his harsh voice quelled the turmoil. The sentry

guarding the horses rushed forward, gabbling in a voice that quavered with fear.

"It was the infidel dogs, master!" he cried. "I saw them too late, and they have escaped! I heard them shout, one to the other as they fled! One cried: 'Head for Kasr-el-Tuc, Pierre!' And so they swung to the west! Shall we pursue them, master?"

El Cassim's glare of rage slowly faded, and a gleam of relief came into his eyes.

"No!" he said at last. "Of course they will head for Kasr-el-Tuc, for there they will find water! But it is half a day's ride from here. By the time they return—if they are fools enough to do so—Fort Turezzo will be in our hands!

THE ATTACK ON FORT TUREZZO

ONLY until they were hidden behind the sand dunes did Mart and Pierre gallop westward. Then they halted, listening for sounds of pursuit. Darkness was fading; dawn was near.

"It worked!" breathed Mart at last. "The sentry heard me shout to you, Pierre. So far, so good! Now we'll circle round and get to the fort before Kahlek can put his treacherous scheme into operation"

A soft pinkness was tinging the grey horizon as the two friends approached the fort. When they were twenty yards from the dark walls, Mart heard the click of a rifle bolt. One of the legionnaires had seen the two dim figures approaching!

"Hold your fire!" Mart called in a low, penetrating voice. They moved on, and a face peered down at them between the battlements.

"Cuchard!" Mart called urgently, recognising the legionnaire above. "It is I, Faber! And Durand is with me! A rope, mon ami, swiftly! And if Kahlek is around, do not let him know we are here!"

The burly Cuchard acted quickly.

"Name of a dog!" he exclaimed as Mart came clambering up the rope and over the battlements. Kahlek returned and told us you were dead!"

"Where is Kahlek now?" broke in Mart tensely.

"Kahlek?" said Cuchard, lowering the rope for Pierre. "I have not seen him since he went off watch half an hour ago!"

Mart turned and ran for the broad steps leading down into the courtyard. Cries of surprise broke from the men guarding the ramparts as they saw that their comrade had returned. Mart skirted a long, low barrack room, running like the wind, and his boot crashed against the heavy door of the ammunition store, flinging it open. Then he was clattering down the short flight of stone steps to the cellar where the ammunition lay.

With a snarl Kahlek whirled round. He had been bending over a box of grenades, and there was a long length of slow fuse in his hand. He dropped the fuse, and one hand flashed to the bayonet at his belt, but Mart was too quick for him. In a headlong dive the Englishman flung himself forward.

His flying tackle brought Kahlek crashing down. For a few brief moments there was a fierce struggle. Then Mart's fist jerked up in a blow to the jaw which had all the power of his bitter contempt and fury behind it, Kahlek grunted, and went limp.

As Mart rose slowly, Colonel Latour, Pierre, and half-a-dozen legionnaires burst into the store.

"Legionnaire Faber reporting, my Colonel," said Mart, coming smartly to attention. "This man is a traitor! He planned to blow up the ammunition and then open the gates to El Cassim. If the Colonel permits, I suggest that we carry out Kahlek's plan! But we will make only a small explosion from signal rockets—and then lay on a big welcome for El Cassim and his renegades!"

* * * *

It was three hours past dawn when a sheet of flame shot up from within the fortress. Even as the muffled roar of the explosion echoed over the desert, El Cassim and his band came spurring over the crest of the dunes where they had been lying in wait for the signal. One or two scattered shots came from the ramparts—but that was all!

The massive gates swung open to reveal the courtyard beyond. In a jostling mass the Arabs swept on through the gates, slithering their horses to a halt, and milling around as they sought to come to grips with their enemies.

But the courtyard was empty! And all round the inner side of the broad rampart wall, battlements of sand bags had been set up! In the same way, the three flights of steps leading to the ramparts had been blocked by great walls of sandbags, and bayonets had been set handle-first in the sandbag walls to make a terrible barrier for any Arabs who tried to charge up the steps!

Mart and Pierre exchanged grimly triumphant glances as they looked down. With the rest of the legionnaires, they were strung out along the ramparts, safely protected by the ring of sandbags along the inner edge of the wall.

These were Mart's preparations for El Cassim, and they were successful! At a command from Colonel Latour, the legionnaires opened fire, and a hail of bullets swept the massed renegades below!

There was no escape—and no way of coming to grips with the legionnaires! A hand grenade, flung by Mart Faber, exploded on the ground just before the gates as a warning to any of the Arabs who thought they might burst through to freedom!

Suddenly there were shrill cries of surrender! panic spread like fire, and Arab after Arab threw down his rifle and lifted his hands in defeat. El Cassim himself lay wounded and groaning on the ground.

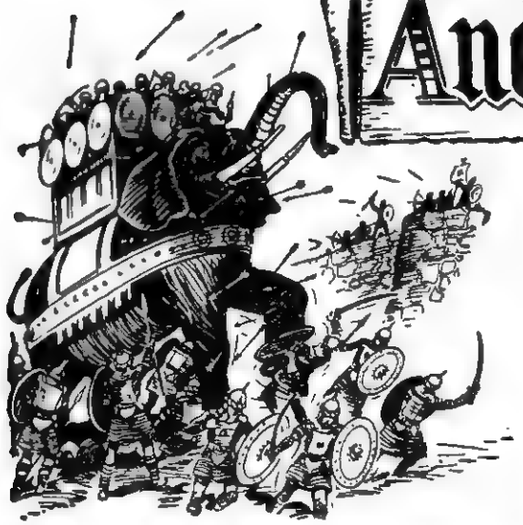
A bugle-call sounded: the legionnaires ceased fire. All was very quiet. Mart put down his hot rifle and turned to see Colonel Latour just behind him.

"The battle is won, and we have a lot of prisoners, Faber!" smiled the Colonel, gazing down. "This will be a surprise for the relief column when it arrives. Name of a dog, but what a surprise!"

Mart and Pierre exchanged glances, and Mart turned to the Colonel with a grin curving his dry lips.

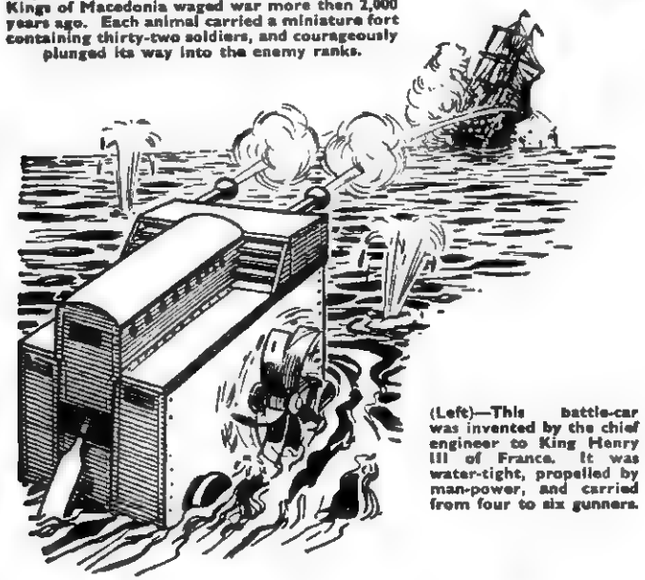
"My Colonel," he said in a croaking voice, "Legionnaire Durand and I wish to volunteer for a sortie to the oasis. And this time we shall return with water—gallons of it!"

Ancient Warriors



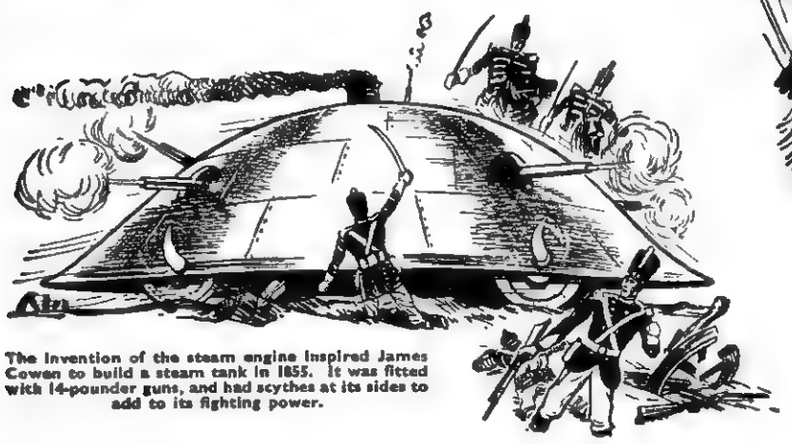
Elephants were driven into battle when the Kings of Macedonia waged war more than 2,000 years ago. Each animal carried a miniature fort containing thirty-two soldiers, and courageously plunged its way into the enemy ranks.

For hundreds of years, from 400 B.C. onwards, war chariots were used. Early ones were fitted with scythes; later ones had spikes and crossbows. The battle-car shown here went into action in the sixteenth century.



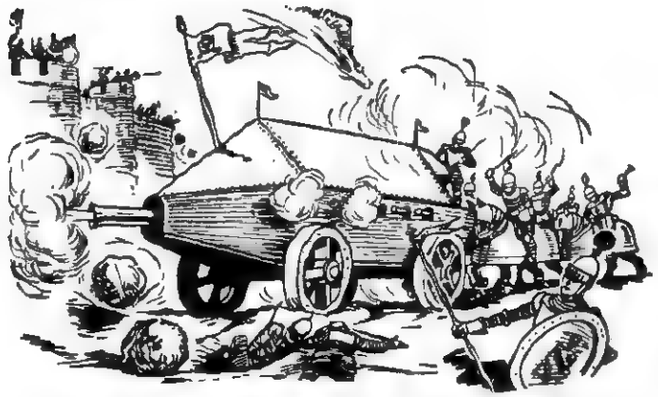
(Left)—This battle-car was invented by the chief engineer to King Henry III of France. It was water-tight, propelled by man-power, and carried from four to six gunners.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Simms and Vickers introduced a tank driven by a petrol engine. With armour-plate and machine-guns, it proved to be a formidable vehicle. Its weakness was a tendency to get stuck in the mud.

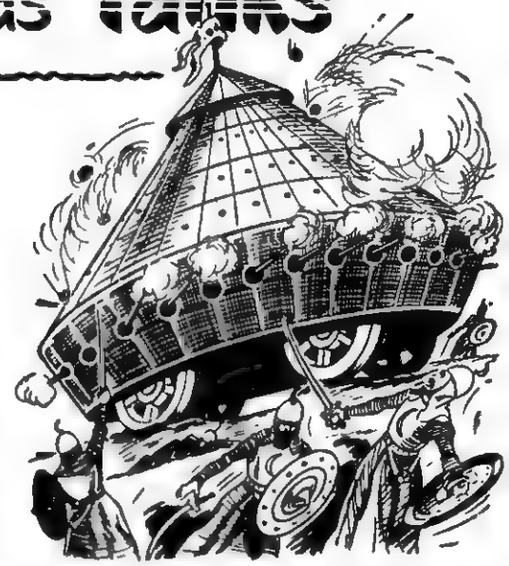


The invention of the steam engine inspired James Cowen to build a steam tank in 1855. It was fitted with 14-pounder guns, and had scythes at its sides to add to its fighting power.

used Elephants as Tanks



This sixteenth-century battle-chariot was pushed by horses which had been given the protection of metal shields. The "tank" itself was made of steel and brass, and no fewer than eight guns could be brought to bear on the enemy. The horses were at the rear so that the tank acted as a shield for them.



Leonardo da Vinci hit on the idea of a tank fitted with twenty or so bellows "to terrify the enemy's horses." It also carried a squad of soldiers. Da Vinci emphasised that the machine was useful only for breaking up the ranks of the opposing forces. Hand-to-hand battles would follow.

Tanks with caterpillar wheels were introduced by the British during the first World War. They went crashing over the top of the German trenches, their guns inflicting terrific casualties. Unfortunately the early models travelled at little more than walking pace, and hundreds of them sank into the soft, muddy plains of France and Belgium, there to be battered by the enemy guns.

The Churchill tank of World War II was a speedy, 40-ton dreadnought which fought in hundreds of battles. Not only did it scatter the enemy in the deserts of North Africa, but it thundered through Italy and France, playing its part in driving the Germans from the countries which they had invaded.

REX FIGHTS the JUNGLE MENACE

By Brian Mead

THE SHOT THAT SAVED A VILLAGE

"KEEP a good look out, Burt. We should see our native guide, Wona, in a few minutes! Then we can get cracking after those animals!"

Rex Kingsley raised his voice above the roar of the baggage-laden jeep in which he and his pal, Burt Wilson, were travelling.

On either side of them towered giant, cultivated coconut palms, backed by the tall range of mountains which were the chief feature of this island of Dayao, just north of Borneo.

The jungle appeared to be deserted, but Rex knew that, somewhere about here, should be waiting the Malayan guide, Wona, to lead them to the porters he had hired for them from the inland native village of Lanna.

The pals earned their living by hunting animals for various zoos.

An English zoo had invited them to capture a series of wild animals, among them an orang-utan, tapirs, Malayan bears and a rare species of off-white elephant; and the jungle to the north of Dayao contained some very good specimens.

"If the chaps from Lanna can't find the animals we want, no one can, Burt," Rex said seriously. "They're the best hunters on the island and it's from them we first learnt the animals existed here. They know all their haunts. No one else has ever ventured far north—"

He broke off with an exclamation. His eyes, searching the jungle in front, had seen a movement in the undergrowth.

"Pull up, Burt. This must be Wona now!"

Burt clapped on the brakes and the jeep lurched to a standstill. At the same time the bushes at the side of the jungle track parted and Rex gave a shout of amazement as a figure stumbled into view.

It was Wona, their guide—but he was not the smiling, brown-skinned figure they had seen a week ago. He was panting as if he had been running hard, the white Malayan headdress that usually covered his smooth black hair was missing and he was covered in mud. While from one side of his forehead flowed a dark trickle of blood.

"Wona!" Rex gasped, leaping from the jeep. "Wona, what's happened? How did you get like this?"

The guide paused before him, swaying on his feet.

"Mister Kingsley—" He jerked out the words. "Devil animal—attack Lanna. You go quick! You save people!"

The Astounding Adventure of a Fearless Big Game Hunter

" Devil animal ? " exclaimed Burt, staring. " What the— "

But the urgency in Wona's tone was too much for Rex to hesitate. Something was happening at Lanna. The little village was being attacked by some strange animal. The natives needed the help of the game hunters.

The guide dropped weakly to his knees.

" Wona rest. He come only fetch you. Return for me later."

There was no time to argue—and no comfort for the wounded man in the bouncing jeep. Rex realised that and swung up beside Burt.

" Drive on quickly ! We'll send someone for Wona after we've dealt with this ' devil animal ' ! "

The jeep bounded forward. But the expression on Burt's face was one of bewilderment.

" Rex, what does it mean ? What can this animal be ? "

" I don't know. But we'll soon find out."

Grimly Rex reached for his rifle, among the baggage, and began to load it. The bullets were tough enough to pierce the thickest hide. If the " devil animal " could be killed, he would kill it.

The coconut palms gave way to teak as the pals rounded a bend in the jungle path. Before them they could see the outskirts of Lanna, the houses built in trees, reached by rope ladders. From farther on came crashing, shouting, the chattering of startled monkeys and squawks of wheeling, terrified birds.

Then, as they came in sight of the main clearing of the village, around which natives crouched terrified in their tree-houses.

Rex sat bolt upright. Burt gave a howl.

" There it is ! Corks, Rex ! It's a rhino—a giant rhino ! And look at that chap ! "

A rhinoceros it was—larger than most of its kind, if not exactly the giant Burt called it. This, Rex realised, was the so-called " devil animal "—and no wonder, for rhino were almost extinct on Dayao.

A native had appeared in front of it, wielding a spear. The rhino saw him. Its head went down. It charged.

Bravely the native stood his ground. He threw the spear. A great cry came from other watching natives as it struck—a groan as it bounced off the rhino's thick hide. Then the native was running, running for his life towards one of the tree-ladders, with the enraged rhino in pursuit.

Rex knew the native couldn't make the ladder in time. He swung up his loaded rifle.

Rex's nerve was steady. He was one of the finest shots in his business. He aimed for the rhino and pulled the trigger.

Crack !

But at the instant Rex fired, the jeep hit a bump. It lurched and the rifle jerked sideways. Rex gave a cry of dismay.

" Missed ! Burt ! Brake ! Brake ! I'll try again ! "

" No need to ! " Burt almost hooted. " You've got it ! "

The rhino had stopped as if it had come up against a brick wall. As the native ran on to safety, it staggered. Rex knew then it was wounded—but not vitally. He levelled his rifle again.

But the rhino saw him. It was old and wise. It turned and, blood dripping from its left shoulder, plunged into the trees at the edge of the clearing and vanished with whirlwind speed.

Burt braked. He looked at Rex and wiped his face.

" Bad luck, Rex."

Rex nodded. His face was grim.

" The rhino must be mad to attack a village ; and it'll be madder still now it's wounded. One of the first things we must do when we hit the trail is to finish it off, or it'll be attacking other villages.

" Well, here's Chief Salu. You arrange it," said Burt.

An elderly, white-headed native, white-robed, with intricately-carved bone ornaments and gorgeous peacock feathers in his hair, approached, attended by half a dozen tall young men. Rex and Burt descended from the jeep as the chief raised his hand.

" I greet you, White Men. You come—just in time to save my son." He indicated the native who had wielded the spear. " You have my gratitude," he said sincerely. " I am sorry only that I must distress you."

Rex looked at him sharply, in sudden apprehension.

" I do not understand, Chief Salu. What do you mean ? "

" I mean— " The old man sighed. " For seven days now the devil animal has been attacking us. Our spears are of no use against it. Two of my finest men have been killed by it. My people are afraid to venture beyond the village. And now it is wounded, its anger will be great. White Man Kingsley, I am afraid my men cannot guide you north to the animals you seek, else fresh disaster befall us ! "

BEWARE—CROCODILES !

" BUT, Salu— " Burt began in protest. " Salu, you can't let us down. We must have porters and guides. We'll— "

He stopped as Rex, with a warning look, seized his arm and drew him aside.

" It's no use, Burt," Rex said softly. " Salu's made up his mind and the whole village is behind him. Anyway, you can't blame them. You saw what happened just now when his son met up with the rhino."

" But what about the animals we've come to capture ? " Burt argued. " We promised to deliver them to an England bound ship by the end of the month, and we haven't time to go hunting elsewhere."

" I know," Rex said, frowning. " But we've never let a customer down yet, and—wait a minute ! "

He drew a deep breath as an idea struck him. Swiftly he turned back to Chief Salu. Burt's jaw dropped when Rex spoke again.

" I understand, Salu. I respect you feelings. But would you, perhaps, make a bargain with me ? If I bring the devil animal to you—dead—will your men guide us to the animals in the north ? "

Salu started. He gazed at Rex in admiration.

" White Man is brave. And your weapon is powerful against the devil animal." He looked at Rex's

rifle. "I would agree to your bargain. But it is understood that we must see the devil animal when it is dead."

"It is understood," agreed Rex, and turned to the wide-eyed Burt. "O.K., Burt. Let's get some baggage and be off."

Burt made no protest and, after sending someone to bring back the wounded Wona, Rex went over to the jeep to collect some light kit. The jungle from here on was too dense for the jeep to penetrate and the explorer pals would have to go on foot.

Before long they set out, following the trail of the rhino.

It was clearly defined. The maddened animal had charged willy-nilly through the jungle, leaving broken branches, trampled bushes and frightened birds and animals where it had passed. Only now and again had Rex and Burt to use sharp machetes to cut through the undergrowth. And here and there, from the wound Rex had inflicted on the animal, was a tell-tale spot of blood.

Before long they gained a magnificent forest of teak trees and soon came to the bank of a wide river, winding in and out of the trees, extending to the mountains.

Rex stared keenly across. There were no rapids here, but the water was being lashed to foam. Heavy ripples splashed against the bank.

And then, as he watched, an ugly, shining snout rose out of the water. Teeth closed with a vicious snap at the air. Then a massive tail whipped across, sent spray over both himself and Burt. Burt grimaced.

"Crocodiles!" he exclaimed. "Say, Rex, what's got into them?"

"The rhino's been this way!" Rex said grimly. "That's made 'em furious."

He pointed. A beaten track led down the sloping bank to the water and there, close to the edge, he had just noticed three spots of blood.

"It came down to drink," he said quietly. "That bullet must still be troubling it and the crocs smelt the blood. And, Burt!" His voice rose suddenly as he touched the spots. "The blood isn't dry yet. We're hot on the rhino's track now."

Soon the river widened and, as the ground sloped downhill, they could see the white foam of rapids racing in the distance. A little later the trees around them began to thin until the bank was clear. They saw tree-stumps and one or two logs.

"I remember now," said Rex. "A Dutch planter has the rights to this part of the jungle. He cuts teak to cart down to the coastal towns to sell. Yes—look!"

In the distance, tramping ponderously along the cleared bank, following the line of the river, were several elephants. Each, with a mahout sitting behind its ears, was hauling a huge teak log, fastened to it by chains.

"Like we've seen 'em in Siam," said Burt. "I wonder if they saw—"

He stopped as Rex caught his arm. From their right, in among the jungle, had come a sudden rustle, a thump and a pained grunt.

"The rhino—for a cert!" breathed Rex. "Burt, this is it! Spread out. You work round from the rear and when I show myself chase it towards me. Fire over it's head. I'll do the rest."

Burt nodded, gulping. He knew there were few who could beat Rex when it came to shooting a moving target.

The pals split up, Rex moving to the left and Burt to the right. Rex stole forward cautiously, rifle at the ready. The jungle was still—as always during the heat of the day.

There came another grunt and Rex thrilled. It was the rhino all right. Then, to confirm it, he saw Burt's arm wave above some bushes. Any moment now and he would sight it and show himself and then—

He started as there came the sharp scream of a monkey from above. His head jerked up. Then just as quickly, he ducked.

The monkey's cry had saved him. A striped shape shot over his head and landed with a thump just beyond. A Malayan tiger, smaller than its Indian brother, but just as fierce! Even as Rex straightened, it gathered itself and leapt again.

Rex's rifle came up. Coolly, calculatedly, he fired.

There came a howl from the tiger. In mid-air it twisted. This time Rex had made no mistake. One glance showed him the tiger was dead as it struck the ground.

The jungle seemed suddenly alive with noise. Rudely awakened, monkeys and birds screamed and called. A crashing in the bushes told him that Burt was running to investigate the shots.

Then came a louder crash from just ahead. Not a moment too soon. Rex hurled himself to one side as a great shape thundered past him. Warned, the rhino was making its escape!

As Rex picked himself up, Burt was at his side. He saw the tiger and asked no questions. Together the explorer pals started in the direction the rhino had vanished.

They reached the river bank. There the rhino had swerved. Gazing down the slope, Rex saw it rushing madly along the cleared track.

Burt gasped in dismay.

"That tiger! If it hadn't been for that, we'd have got the rhino. Looks like we'll never catch the rhino now."

Rex stared down the river track.

"Burt, we've got to find that rhino—and not only because we want the Lanna natives to help us in our search for those zoo animals. You see the way it's taken? The same route as the elephants. And in its present mood it won't stop when it meets up with them. It'll charge right into them!"

RIDING THE RAPIDS

BURT'S eyes widened in dismay.

"Rex, you're right! But what can we do?" he gasped. "The rhino's going too fast for us to catch up with it in time."

Rex turned to the river, and pointed to the teak trees lying ready for carting on the bank.

"Something else is moving pretty fast, too. Faster than the rhino!" he said grimly. "The river!

Burt, grab that log!" He pointed. "There's a chance we'll catch the rhino up if we ride the river on that log."

"But what then? And what about the crocs—and the rapids?" argued Burt. "Rex, we can't—"

But Rex was not listening. After slinging his rifle on his shoulder, he was heaving with all his strength at a log that lay on the edge of the sloping bank.

Burt hesitated. But only for a minute. He trusted his explorer pal. He believed in him. If Rex had a plan it would be all right.

He joined Rex. Together they heaved at the log.

"It's going!" Rex panted. "Once more—push!"

The log moved. With a cracking of undergrowth it plunged down the river bank and, throwing up a mighty fountain of water, struck the river. In a flash Rex was down the bank and astride the log. Just a second before the current whipped the log into mid-stream, Burt was behind him.

Then they were racing for the rapids, towed along at an incredible pace by the current.

Rex sat upright, eyes glued in front of him. The rhino was still following the river path. In its panic-maddened flight it would run for miles, straight ahead. And from the centre of the river to the rhino would never be far.

For Rex had made his plans. There was one way and one way only to stop the rhino from charging the men and elephants, to stop it from escaping to terrorise Lanna and ruin all his and Burt's plans. To kill it! To shoot it from the river.

It would be the greatest shot of his career if he pulled it off. And he had to!

"Rex!" Burt's shout broke into his thoughts.

At the same moment Rex saw a glistening snout rise from the water in front of him. He saw bared, wicked-looking teeth. The crocodiles had scented them!

Quick as thought he unslung his rifle. With all his strength he struck at that snout with the butt. The crocodile, with a grunting roar, went under. But, in an instant, another head reared in its place.

Rex struck again. A scaly tail came whipping out of the water, threatening to sweep him off the log. Just in time he diverted it with his rifle butt. Then another snout—another blow. From behind him came the crack of a shot. Burt, too, was doing battle with the scaly terrors.

On the log swept, carried by the current. On, too, came the crocodiles, swept with them. Desperately Rex struck out right and left and was conscious of Burt doing the same. Round and round the crocodiles whirled, snapping, missing, snapping again. Perspiration flooded into Rex's eyes, almost blinding him.

The he heard a roaring sound. At the same time, with one last vicious snap, the crocodiles turned away. The log swept on, leaving them behind.

"Gosh! That was hot!" panted Burt. "Are you all right, Rex?"

"Yes!" Rex gasped and dashed a hand across his eyes. "But we're not out of the wood yet. See why the crocs sheered off?"

They were catching up with the rhino fast. He could see it, still racing along the bank, gaining on the elephants, which were also in view, their mahouts unconscious of any danger. But in front of the explorer pals was the foam-tipped line of rocks marking the rapids. The rapids—rushing water and razor-sharp rocks!

"Paddle, Burt! For your life!" panted Rex.

To be dashed against the rocks would be fatal. He thrust the butt of his rifle into the water. As the first rock seemed to rush at him, he gave his rifle a twist.

Burt followed suit. The teak log was unwieldy; only by an inch it missed the rock—to hurl towards another. Again they swerved. Then on. Another twist, another swerve. A stretch of foaming water. A high pinnacle of rock! Rex thrust at it with his rifle and they shot past, almost overturning.

The log rocked alarmingly—then straightened.

And now the pals were in a stretch of calmer water. The river still raced and was shallow, but there were no rocks. While straight ahead, rapidly being overhauled, was the wounded, savage rhino!

It was barely a hundred yards from the elephants now. The mahouts had seen it. They were trying to urge the big animals out of the way. But they were hampered by the heavy logs they towed.

Rex tightened his grip on the log with his legs. It was swinging and shaking, but he forced himself to sit steady. The log was only thirty yards behind the rhino now. Ten yards! The rhino was fifty yards from the elephants, but soon he and Burt would be abreast of it.

He raised his rifle and took aim. The log swept on, dipping and rising perilously. Nearer, nearer. Three yards to the rhino, ten from the elephants.

Crack!

Rex fired.

Five yards from the last elephant, the rhino pulled up. Then, slowly, it went down on its knees, rolled over and lay still!

Burt gave a cheer.

"Rex! Rex! You've done it this time. Good shot! That rhino won't trouble the Lanna tribe again."

Rex smiled grimly.

"Well, I've kept my part of the bargain, Burt, now it's up to Chief Salu to keep his." He thrust the butt of his rifle into the water. "Paddle for the bank."

It was two nights later, when Rex and Burt returned to Lanna. With them they brought the dreaded "devil animal"—towed by chains from behind an elephant lent them by the grateful Dutch planter.

The pals received a magnificent welcome. Feasting and dancing were held in honour of Rex and Burt.

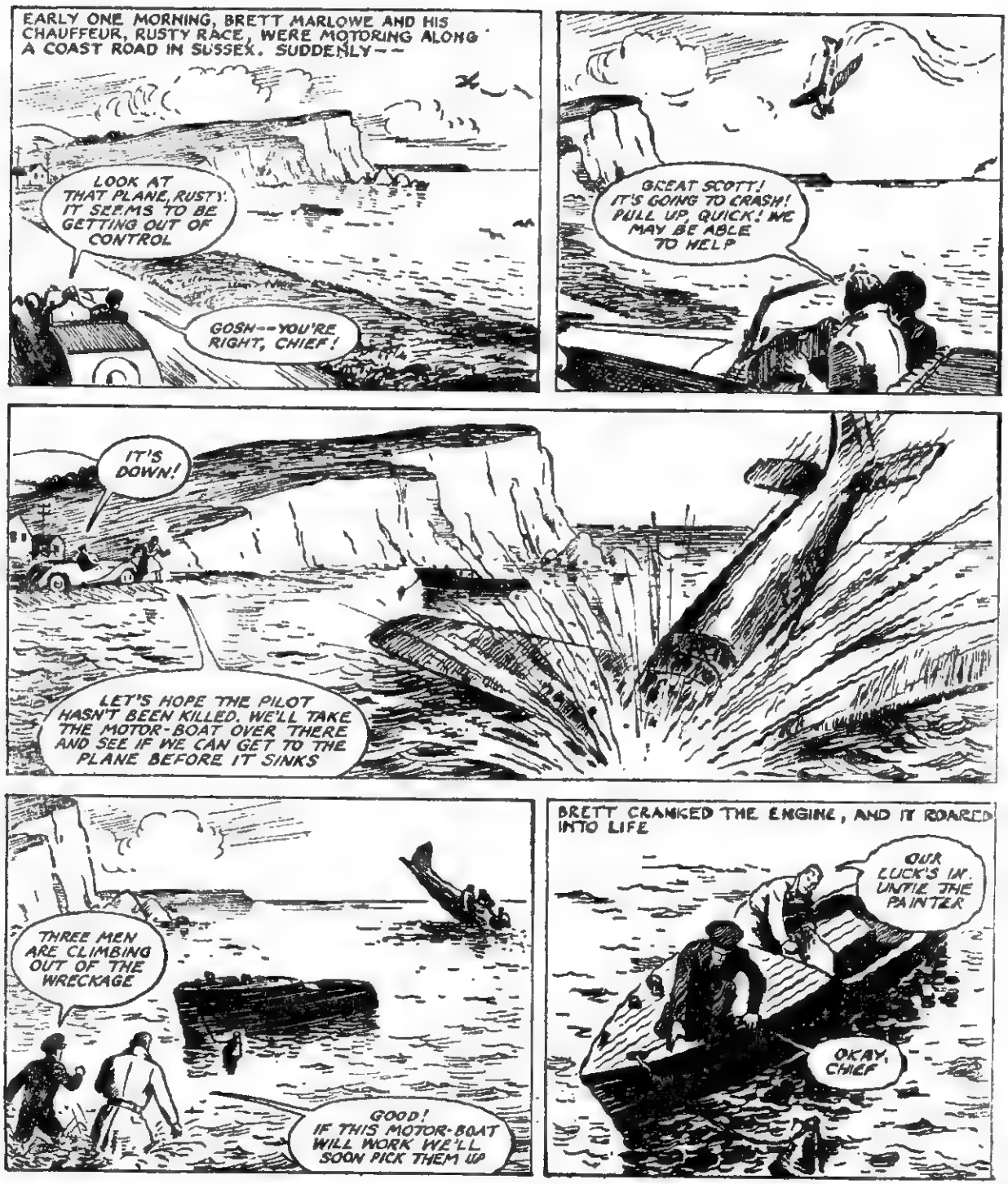
The very next day an expedition set out for the north of the island. Rex and Burt led it and with them went all but a few of the able-bodied young men of Lanna.

When the explorer pals sailed from Dayao a month later they had all the wild animals of which they had been in search—and more besides. But both Rex and Burt agreed that capturing them had been easy, compared with their exciting battle with the mad rhino!

Starring Brett Marlowe, Detective

By JOHN FORDICE

The Riddle of the Rescued Airmen


EARLY ONE MORNING, BRETT MARLOWE AND HIS CHAUFFEUR, RUSTY RACE, WERE MOTORING ALONG A COAST ROAD IN SUSSEX. SUDDENLY--
LOOK AT THAT PLANE, RUSTY! IT SEEMS TO BE GETTING OUT OF CONTROL
GOSH--YOU'RE RIGHT, CHIEF!
GREAT SCOTT! IT'S GOING TO CRASH! PULL UP, QUICK! WE MAY BE ABLE TO HELP
IT'S DOWN!
LET'S HOPE THE PILOT HASN'T BEEN KILLED. WE'LL TAKE THE MOTOR-BOAT OVER THERE AND SEE IF WE CAN GET TO THE PLANE BEFORE IT SINKS
THREE MEN ARE CLIMBING OUT OF THE WRECKAGE
GOOD! IF THIS MOTOR-BOAT WILL WORK WE'LL SOON PICK THEM UP
BRETT CRANKED THE ENGINE, AND IT ROARED INTO LIFE
OUR LUCK'S IN. UNTIE THE PAINTER
OKAY, CHIEF

AS BRETT AND RUSTY SPED TO THE RESCUE--
HELLO--A SPEED-BOAT HAS JUST SHOT OUT FROM BEHIND THOSE ROCKS. IT'S MAKING STRAIGHT FOR THE PLANE, TOO
GEE! IT'S TRAVELLING TWICE AS FAST AS WE ARE. WELL, I GUESS THE AIRMEN WON'T MIND WHO PICKS 'EM UP!
THE SPEED-BOAT SWIRLED PAST SO CLOSE TO BRETT AND RUSTY THAT THEY WERE ALMOST PITCHED OVERBOARD
HEY! WHAT'S THE GAME, YOU CRAZY IDIOT?
THE FOOL DID THAT DELIBERATELY!
WHILE BRETT AND RUSTY HURRIEDLY BALED OUT THEIR BOAT, THE CRASHED AIRMEN STEPPED FROM THEIR SINKING PLANE
EET IS GOOD ZAT YOU REACHED US BEFORE ZOSE OTHER PEOPLE WE WANT TO 'AVE NOZZIN TO DO WITH ZEM
HEAR THAT, CHIEF? THEY THINK WE AREN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR THEM. OF ALL THE CHEEK!
THERE'S A LOT OF ODDS AND ENDS FLOATING AWAY FROM THE WRECKAGE, BUT I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING WORTH PICKING UP
PARIS PRESSE
THAT NEWSPAPER "PARIS PRESSE" SUGGESTS THE AIRMEN CAME FROM FRANCE. I WONDER WHERE THEY WERE MAKING FOR
SHORTLY AFTERWARDS THE SPEED-BOAT SET OFF FOR THE SHORE
WELL, THAT'S THE END OF THAT ADVENTURE, CHIEF
NO, RUSTY--IT'S ONLY THE START. IN MY OPINION WE'VE BOTTED INTO A REALLY BIG CRIME. WE'LL RETURN TO THE BEACH AS FAST AS THIS OLD TUB WILL TAKE US AND PICK UP THE TRAIL OF THOSE AIRMEN
AS SOON AS HE WAS BACK IN HIS CAR, BRETT TOOK OUT A ROAD-MAP
THERE'S A PRIVATE AIRFIELD FARTHER ALONG THE COAST. P'RAPS THAT'S WHERE THEY WERE MAKING FOR. WE'LL GO AND HAVE A LOOK AT IT

BRETT'S HUNCH WAS RIGHT. WHILE HE AND RUSTY WERE HIDING BEHIND A HUT ON THE AIRFIELD THEY SAW THE MANAGER GREET THE AIRMEN AND THEIR RESCUER
YOU HAD A NARROW ESCAPE WHEN YOU CRASHED, FRANCOIS! I'LL GET YOU TO RYELEIGH AIRPORT AS SOON AS I CAN. BUT THE ONLY PLANE I HAVE AVAILABLE IS BEING OVERHAULED
OFFICE
I CAN'T GET IT READY BEFORE TWO O'CLOCK, GUV NOR!
TAKE THE CAR, RUSTY, AND DRIVE AS FAST AS YOU CAN TO RYELEIGH AIRPORT. I WANT YOU TO BE THERE WHEN THEY ARRIVE. WATCH WHERE THEY GO, AND PHONE ME AT THE GEORGE HOTEL JUST UP THE ROAD AT 4 O'CLOCK
WHEN RUSTY HAD GONE, BRETT HURRIED TO THE NEAREST POST OFFICE ENGINEERS' DEPARTMENT
POST OFFICE
G.P.O. ENGINEERS DEPT.
I'M CERTAIN THOSE AIRMEN ARE CROOKS. THAT'S WHY THEY DIDN'T WANT TO BE RESCUED BY ME. BUT I WON'T REST UNTIL I'VE FOUND OUT WHAT THEIR GAME IS
BRETT INTRODUCED HIMSELF TO ONE OF THE TELEPHONE ENGINEERS
I NEED A TELEPHONE TESTING APPARATUS FOR A CASE I'M WORKING ON. WOULD YOU LET ME BORROW ONE?
WHY, YES, MR. MARLOWE. WE'RE ONLY TOO GLAD TO HELP YOU
A LITTLE LATER BRETT WAS CLIMBING A TELEPHONE POLE AMONG SOME TREES NEAR THE AIRFIELD
NOW TO TAP THE LINE FROM THE AIRFIELD OFFICE. MAYBE I'LL OVERHEAR SOME INTERESTING CONVERSATION

NOTHING HAPPENED FOR A WHILE, THEN SUDDENLY HE HEARD THE VOICE OF THE AIRFIELD MANAGER
ANOTHER TWO MEN WILL BE COMING OVER FROM FRANCE TO-MORROW MORNING, AND I'LL WANT YOU TO FLY THEM TO RYELEIGH AIRPORT
I UNDERSTAND, BOSS
SO THE FRENCHMAN AND HIS PAL AREN'T THE ONLY ONES WHO MAKE THIIS MYSTERIOUS TRIP. I THOUGHT AS MUCH!
UNSEEN, BRETT RETURNED TO THE AIRFIELD. AND AT TWO O'CLOCK---
THE PLANE'S READY NOW, GUVNOR
GOOD! THE PILOT CAN LEAVE WITH FRANCOIS AND MIKE AT ONCE
AND RUSTY WILL BE WAITING FOR THEM AT RYELEIGH
BRETT WATCHED FRANCOIS AND MIKE GO TO THE PLANE
G-BC
I GUESS I'LL MAKE TRACKS FOR THE GEORGE HOTEL, AND WAIT FOR RUSTY TO PHONE ME
WHEN THE PLANE TOUCHED DOWN AT RYELEIGH AIRPORT, RUSTY WAS THERE KEEPING WATCH
CUSTOMS
THE CHIEF TOLD ME TO SHADOW THEM, SO HERE GOES
AT FOUR O'CLOCK RUSTY REPORTED TO BRETT
FRANCOIS AND THE OTHER MAN HAVE ARRIVED, CHIEF, EACH CARRYING A BAG. THEY'RE STAYING THE NIGHT AT THE AIRPORT HOTEL

YOU SAY THEY WERE CARRYING ONLY ONE BAG EACH, RUSTY? WELL, WHEN THEY LEFT HERE THEY HAD TWO EACH. THIS CONFIRMS MY SUSPICIONS. IF WE CAN FIND OUT WHAT THEY'VE DONE WITH THE MISSING BAGS, I GUESS WE'LL SCUPPER THEIR LITTLE GAME!
I'M SURE THEY DIDN'T LEAVE THE BAGS IN THE PLANE, CHIEF. SO THEY MUST HAVE DUMPED THEM SOMEWHERE ON THE WAY HERE.
JUST SO! AND I THINK I KNOW WHY! NOW I WANT YOU TO DRIVE BACK AND MEET ME AT THE R.A.F. STATION NEAR OAKBRIDGE
BY THE TIME RUSTY GOT TO THE R.A.F. STATION, BRETT HAD HAD A WORD WITH THE COMMANDING OFFICER AND HAD RECEIVED PERMISSION TO MAKE USE OF A HELICOPTER
I'LL BE READY WHENEVER YOU WANT ME, MR. MARLOWE
WHAT'S GOING ON, CHIEF?
WE'RE UP AGAINST A BIG RACKET, RUSTY. I'VE DISCOVERED THAT TWO MORE MEN ARE FLYING OVER FROM FRANCE TO THE PRIVATE AIRFIELD. WE SHALL NEED THIS HELICOPTER TO-MORROW MORNING
THE NEXT MORNING, BRETT AND RUSTY WERE IN THE HELICOPTER WHEN THEY SAW ANOTHER PLANE ALIGHT ON THE PRIVATE AIRFIELD
EACH MAN IS CARRYING TWO BAGS AS BEFORE, RUSTY. WE'LL FOLLOW THEIR MACHINE AS SOON AS THEY TAKE OFF AGAIN
THE MEN WENT TO ANOTHER PLANE A FEW MINUTES LATER
I'VE CHECKED THE STUFF, SO YOU CAN CARRY ON. SAME ARRANGEMENTS AS BEFORE. NO ONE WILL EVER SUSPECT OUR SCHEME
LEAVE IT TO US, BOSS. WE KNOW OUR JOB

BRETT'S PILOT TRAILED THE OTHER PLANE IN THE DIRECTION OF RYELEIGH AIRPORT
KEEP DOWN CLOSE TO THE HEDGES SO THEY WON'T SPOT US
LIKE WE USED TO DO IN THE WAR, EH, MR. MARLOWE? I DID A LOT OF HEDGE-HOPPING
BRETT KEPT HIS EYE ON THE PLANE THROUGH BINOCULARS. AND ALL AT ONCE --
THEY'RE LEANING OUT OF THE COCKPIT. I THINK THEY'RE GOING TO DROP SOMETHING
WHEN THE HELICOPTER FLEW OVER THE SPOT WHERE THE TWO BAGS HAD BEEN DROPPED, RUSTY GAVE A CRY OF AMAZEMENT
WHAT D'YOU KNOW, CHIEF? THERE'S A HUGE NET! SOME OF THE CROOKS MUST HAVE PUT IT THERE TO CATCH THE BAGS!
AND THERE ARE THE MEN WHO COLLECTED THEM! WE HAVEN'T TIME TO LAND--GET READY TO JUMP!

LET'S HOPE WE DON'T CRASH RIGHT THROUGH THE NET, CHIEF!
HURRY, RUSTY— AND BE READY FOR TROUBLE. THE GANG MAY HAVE SPOTTED US
THE TWO MEN HAD VANISHED OVER THE EDGE OF A CHALK QUARRY, BUT——
THIS IS THE WAY THEY WENT. HERE ARE THEIR FOOTPRINTS
THE FOOTPRINTS ENDED ABRUPTLY NEAR THE BOTTOM OF THE QUARRY
WHERE DID THEY GO FROM HERE, CHIEF?
I THINK I CAN ANSWER THAT! THOSE BUSHES DON'T SEEM REAL TO ME

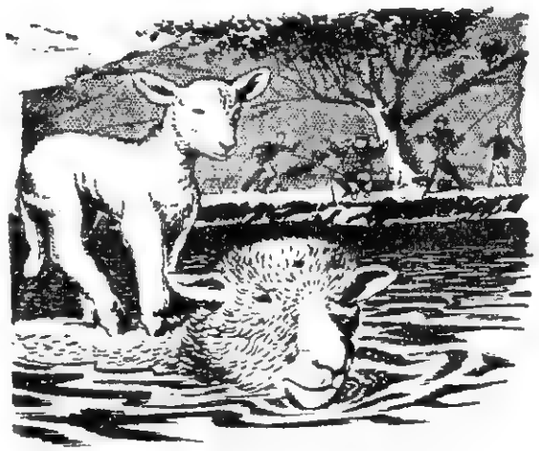
JUST AS I THOUGHT--CAMOUFLAGED NETTING! STAND BY FOR ACTION, RUSTY. THIS IS THE GANG'S HIDE-OUT!
BRETT FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR, AND REVEALED A LARGE CAVE
PHEW! HERE'S THE GANG, COMPLETE WITH A FORTUNE IN VALUABLES!
WATCH OUT, RUSTY! HE'S GOT A GUN!
BY THUNDER, HE'S RUMBLED US! LET HIM HAVE IT!
IN A FLASH BRETT FIRED AT THE CRUMBLING CHALK ABOVE THE CROOKS' HEADS, AND GREAT CHUNKS CAME CRASHING DOWN ON TOP OF THEM
THAT'S FIXED 'EM, CHIEF!
YES. THEY WON'T GIVE US ANY MORE TROUBLE THOSE VALUABLES HAVE ALL BEEN SMUGGLED OVER FROM FRANCE BY PLANE, AND DROPPED INTO THE NET. BUT NOW WE'VE SMASHED THE RACKET WIDE OPEN!
WE'LL GET YOU UNDER LOCK AND KEY, MY LADS. THE POLICE WILL SOON ROUND UP YOUR BOSS AT THE AIRFIELD, AND THE REST OF YOUR ACCOMPLICES
PARIS PRESSE
WHAT AROUSED YOUR SUSPICIONS IN THE FIRST PLACE, CHIEF?
WELL, WHEN WE WERE NEAR THE CRASHED PLANE I SAW A MASK FLOATING IN THE SEA. THAT MADE ME SUSPECT THE MEN WERE CROOKS. AND THE FRENCH NEWSPAPER SUGGESTED THAT THEY WERE PROBABLY SMUGGLING STUFF OVER FROM FRANCE. THE FINAL CLUE WAS THE FACT THAT THE MEN ARRIVED AT RYELEIGH AIRPORT WITH FEWER BAGS THAN THEY SET OUT WITH!

PICTURE PARADE of FACTS from NEAR and FAR

An eager audience has gathered, so the Indian street entertainer begins to climb his swaying bamboo pole a number of clay pots balanced on his head. At the top of the pole he will perch on the small platform and begin to whirl round and round at terrific speed. The piled pots are kept from toppling from his turban by centrifugal force!

Villagers living in a health resort in the Austrian Alps get rid of their aches and pains by spending up to three hours daily lying in hollowed-out tree trunk baths filled with special spring water. Music while they soak is provided by an old-fashioned gramophone.

At one time it was extremely rare for an Eskimo to suffer from toothache; but in recent years the Eskimos have been eating sweets. This has caused rapid tooth decay. Periodically towns and villages are now visited by a floating dental surgery: the ice-breaker O'Iberville. Patients are ferried by helicopter to the ship for treatment.



Fishing along the banks of the River Severn, men were amazed to see a sheep swimming with her lamb on her back. She was attempting to return to the farm from which she'd recently been sold, and had already crossed 375 yards of treacherous quicksand!

Three schoolboys, exploring a derelict farmhouse, pulled up some rotting floorboards and found themselves staring at a "gold mine." Nearly £1,000 in gold sovereigns and half-sovereigns was tied up in bulging bags. None of the boys had dreamt of discovering such treasure.

The only kind of "bite" Mr. Brown of Otley expected when fishing in the River Wharfe was fish trying the bait on the end of his line. But he received an unpleasant surprise when, slipping a nine-inch catch from his hook, the fish leapt at his face and buried its teeth in his lip!

For a stunt, Austrian variety artist Rudolf Schmied decided to live in a huge glass bottle for a year. The bottle was taken on a 12,000 mile tour of Europe, and thousands of people looked through the glass at Rudolf. Stepping out of the bottle when it was ceremoniously smashed at Linz, Rudolf was found to be four and a half stone lighter than when he went in.

A road accident that could only happen in the African wilds was experienced by a man riding his motor-cycle along a jungle road. He collided with a prowling lion! Although the unlucky motor-cyclist lay helpless on the ground, the lion was too shaken to attack—it turned tail and ran!

Peril in Eskimo Valley

By Derek Knight

TRAPPED IN A CANYON!

IN the far North of Canada three men stood on a towering, snow-covered ridge, resting and regaining their breath after a tough climb up a steep slope.

The youngest of the three was Roger Stone. Dressed from head to foot in furs, his eyes gleamed as he peered across the frozen wastes. He had enjoyed every minute of the survey patrol with his two companions—Martin Craig, the famous explorer, and Lafe Ericksen, a tall, fair-haired Norwegian.

They were now returning to their ship, which was still miles away, where the rest of the expedition awaited them.

Roger studied the compass which he wore on one gloved wrist.

"If we keep going along this ridge, sir," he said to Martin Craig, "we'll by-pass Eskimo Valley and strike the sea within two days' march of the ship."

Craig nodded, a smile splitting his craggy, weather-beaten face. He liked the confident way in which Roger spoke.

At the words "Eskimo Valley," Lafe Ericksen moistened his lips.

"That place is dangerous," he said gutturally. "The Chuhmajuk tribe live there—and they do not like white men."

"You're right," nodded Craig. "We'd be lucky to pass through their valley without getting spears in our backs. So we'll give them a wide berth. Come on—let's get going."

The little party had two sledges loaded with tents and supplies. Roger had been towing the smaller one, while the two elder men had hauled the bigger one, which also carried their rifles, between them.

It was at that very moment that Roger saw the bigger sledge begin to move.

It had been halted on a hummock of snow within a few feet of a deep canyon. Now, as the snow softened beneath its runners, it began to slide towards the edge!

"Look out!" Roger shouted.

Craig and Ericksen saw the movement of the sledge, and flung themselves forward. That action brought disaster! As Ericksen dived, his shoulder caught Craig awkwardly and sent the leader of the expedition sprawling towards the yawning canyon!

Roger heard a gasping cry, and saw the bulky, fur-clad figure of Martin Craig slide over the edge after the big sledge.

Three seconds later there came the faint clatter of the sledge striking the bottom of the canyon two hundred feet below!

Roger gulped in horror. The suddenness of the disaster had hit him with the force of a hammer-blow.

The Arctic Tribe Hated White Men—But Roger Changed All That!

Ericksen flung himself flat on his stomach and peered over the edge of the canyon. Suddenly he turned his head, and Roger saw hope in the Norwegian's anguished eyes.

"He—he's on a projecting fold of rock about twenty feet below!" croaked Ericksen hoarsely, and at those words Roger crept forward.

He saw that Martin Craig was unconscious. The famous explorer hung limply along a narrow ledge of ice-covered rock—so near the edge that one arm was hanging down over the awful drop!

"By Jiminy!" breathed Roger, and darted back to the light sledge for the thin, strong coil of rope which lay among the stores.

"Hold this!" he jerked out, handing one end to his companion and paying out the rest over the edge.

"Wait, Roger!" cried Erickson, staring. "If you go down for Martin, you'll be going to your death! It will need more than my strength to haul either of you from the canyon. There's nowhere to make fast the rope, so you can't climb up again! Don't you see! You're putting yourself into a death-trap!"

"We'll argue it out later, Lafe!" said Roger with a grim smile. "Now—hold tight! You can take the strain long enough for me to slide down! Here goes!"

Five seconds later, Roger's feet came to rest on the narrow ledge where Martin Craig lay. After a quick examination, he turned a bleak face upwards.

"A broken leg, Lafe!" he called. "Break some slats from the sledge and lower them to me. I'll fix a strong splint!"

The next half-hour was one of nerve-racking strain. There was little room to move on the ledge.

But at last it was done. Martin Craig's leg was in a stout splint, and the rope was lashed securely round his body beneath the armpits. Roger's voice sounded very quietly in the great silence.

"Drop my ice-pick down, Lafe!" he said calmly. "I'm coming up!"

Lafe Ericksen felt a shudder of despair pass through him. The climb was impossible! The jutting overhang of rock three feet from the top was surely an unconquerable obstacle!

Roger caught the ice-pick neatly as Ericksen dropped it to him. Then, working steadily, he began to chip hand-holds and foot-holds in the glassy wall of sheer rock. Patiently he moved upwards until he reached the point near the top where the rock bulged outwards. Here, it was impossible to climb further.

Coolly, Roger swung his ice-pick so that the point bit deeply into a narrow crevice. Very gently he eased his weight on to the handle, to see if it would bear him. He called to Ericksen, above that bulge of jutting rock: "Stand by to grab my hand, Lafe!"

"Right!" came the voice of Ericksen. But the Norwegian was convinced that Roger was attempting the impossible—that the courageous young Britisher would fall to his doom.

Roger drew a deep breath. Then he levered himself up and got one foot on the projecting handle of the pick. He paused, balancing himself on that precarious perch above the terrible drop.

Then he stood up! His whole weight was on the pick, sticking out at right angles from the ice!

For one breathless second he stood on one leg, his left hand pressed against the overhang to preserve his balance. His right hand shot up high, and he felt Lafe's sinewy fingers close about his wrist. They came a jerk, a swift flurry of loose snow, and Ericksen had hauled him safely over the edge. They both lay panting on the icy ground!

A resounding exclamation in his own language burst from the Norwegian's lips, and Roger saw that his face was damp with sweat.

"Okay, Lafe!" he said in a brisk, cheerful voice. "Now let's get the chief up to safety!"

Together they hauled on the rope. Martin Craig was drawn slowly up the sheer face of the ice ridge. At last he lay on the small sledge under thick furs, his eyes closed.

"He'll stay K.O.'d for some time, I'm afraid," said Roger grimly. "And that broken leg needs urgent attention, too! If we don't get him back to the ship within twenty-four hours, it may be too late for the doctor to save his life!"

Lafe Ericksen pursed his lips and his bronzed face was set hard.

"The only way to make the journey in that time is to go through Eskimo Valley!" he said quietly. "And if the Chuhmajuk Eskimos catch us, it will mean our finish. But if we go the long way round, at least you and I will get through alive! Which is it to be, Roger?"

"All or nothing!" came the prompt reply. "We'll risk Eskimo Valley! Come on, Lafe! Let's get moving!"

For the first time in an hour, the big Norwegian grinned.

"I thought you'd plump for that choice!" he said with gruff content. "It's the only thing we can do—but I wish our rifles and ammunition hadn't disappeared with our big sledge down that crevasse! We may miss them badly before very long!"

THE ESKIMO WARNING

IT was two hours later. Roger and Ericksen lay behind a hummock of snow peering warily over the top towards a huddle of igloos in the centre of Eskimo Valley. They could hear the yapping of dogs, and they could see the Eskimos walking about, busy with their everyday tasks.

Roger glanced back towards the sledge where Martin Craig lay beneath the piled furs, eyes still closed, and breathing heavily.

"We're up against it, Lafe!" he said in a low voice. "The only chance of getting through the valley is to go west of the Eskimo village, keeping close to the valley wall. We can weave between hummocks of snow so that we're hidden for most of the way. But from that big spur of rock onwards, the ground is flat for about a hundred yards! If we try to cross that stretch, we'll stand out against the white snow like—like a black man against a cricket screen."

"If only we had our guns!" Lafe gritted savagely. "We might fight our way through!"

Roger was silent for a while, studying the lie of the land.

"Let's move on till we come to that open stretch," he said suddenly. "I'm beginning to work out a plan to avoid being seen."

Crouching low, they took the hauling leathers of the sledge and began to weave their way forward, always contriving to keep a ridge of snow between them and the village of the Chuhmajuks. When at last they halted, they were close against the valley wall.

"I thought as much!" Roger whispered eagerly. "The snow here has drifted! It's soft, Lafe! And that gives us a chance!" Quickly he explained his plan, and a gleam of hope came into Lafe's eyes.

"It's worth trying!" grunted the Norwegian. "Let's get busy!" Carefully they spread a soft caribou skin over the head of their unconscious leader, propping it up to leave him breathing-space. Then they sprinkled a layer of the soft snow all over the piled sledge.

"There!" panted Roger at last. "That will merge with the background! The Eskimos won't be able to see it at a distance of a hundred yards! Now we'll get moving, Lafe!"

Roger went down on his stomach and began to burrow forward through the soft snow. He was driving a shallow channel in the surface, and moving forward along that channel so that he was just below the level at which he might be spotted from the village on his left!

After a few yards, he was beyond the shelter of the hummock which had hidden them—but he was still out of sight of the Eskimos! Turning, Roger drew steadily on the hauling leathers. The sledge began to move forward, alongside the shallow channel in the snow. Lafe went down on his stomach and began to wriggle after Roger. With one upraised hand, he steadied the snow-covered sledge on its course, so that it did not nose sideways into the channel.

"Right, Roger!" Lafe whispered hoarsely at last. "On you go!"

Clawing and pushing the snow aside, Roger burrowed forward another ten yards. Then once more he turned and drew the sledge after him, with Lafe steadying it as he wriggled along the channel Roger had made.

And so it went on. But it was slow work.

It was a task to try any man's nerves and endurance, for at any second the alarm might be raised by some Eskimo who had wandered to the outskirts of the village, near enough to make out the snow-covered hump of the sledge against its white background!

It took Roger half-an-hour to cover that hundred-yard stretch . . . and then at last, with a gasp of relief, he hauled the sledge out of sight behind a long, low mound of snow on the far side of the village!

"By thunder! We're going to make it, Roger!" croaked Lafe exultantly as he crawled up out of the channel to join his friend.

The going was much easier now, for once again the hard snow lay in a network of smooth, shallow ridges which offered cover from the sharp eyes of the dangerous Chuhmajuks.

Soon the igloo village lay half-a-mile behind the explorers, and they were turning through the pass at the end of the valley to enter the little bay beyond.

With fresh energy they trudged through the crusty snow, hauling the sledge on which lay the unconscious Martin Craig.

"If we make no halts, we should reach the ship in less than eight hours," panted Roger, "and then—"

He broke off as there came the sharp crack of a rifle. A bullet hummed through the air some yards from them!

Roger spun round and dropped to one knee, his hand flying to the haft of the bone-handled knife he wore in a sheath at his belt. Lafe, beside him, was shielding his eyes to peer across the glaring white snow, and muttering with fierce despair in his own language.

"There's not a sign of anybody!" jerked out Roger uneasily, then turned to gaze at his friend.

The Norwegian had bent to fumble with something round his ankle. It was a thin but strong piece of twine which had lain hidden just beneath the surface of the snow.

"I felt it tug at my foot," Lafe exclaimed, "just before the shot!"

Roger's eyes followed the twine as Lafe jerked it up. It ran towards a cluster of ice-clad rocks nearby. Hastily Roger stumbled across to them, and found himself staring down at an old-fashioned rifle which had been wedged in a crevice of the rocks.

"It's a sort of spring trap!" he gasped in dismay. "When the twine caught your foot, the trigger of the rifle was pulled! It's an Eskimo rifle, too, and—" he stopped short, catching his breath sharply. "Then—by thunder! They'll have heard that shot in the village! They'll be out here in a hurry! Come on!"

Panting and struggling, they started to haul the sledge again—but they made painfully slow progress. Both men knew that it was hopeless to escape, and it was with grim despair rather than surprise that they looked back some minutes later to see a number of sledges come sweeping through the pass into the bay, hauled by teams of huskies!

The Chuhmajuks were in full pursuit!

The sledges came on swiftly, and two minutes later the three white men were surrounded by a score of squat, broad-faced Eskimos with rifles. Roger lifted one hand in a peaceful gesture.

"Greetings, O men of the Chuhmajuk tribe!" he cried boldly in the Eskimo tongue. "It is well you have come, for by helping us you can earn a rich reward! Our leader, he who lies on the sledge, is a powerful chief among white men! He will give you presents of knives and guns if you help us reach our ship."

The chief of the tribe shouldered his way forward, and said: "I Rakka, Chief of the Chuhmajuks."

"We do not like the white men!" he growled. "You say this one is a powerful chief, but our eyes tell us that he is weak and helpless! The Snow Gods cry out for vengeance against the white people! Once, three summers ago, the white men came to our valley—and when they went away, the curse of The Great One descended upon us!"

A murmur of anger arose from the Eskimos.

"The Snow Gods were angered because we traded with the white men!" went on Rakka. "In their anger, they sent The Great One, so that our fishing is bad and my people have gone hungry for three long winters!"

"What is this Great One you speak of?" demanded Roger.

"He is the giant walrus who lives in our fishing waters!" cried Rakka fiercely, pointing towards the little bay with its great masses of floating pack-ice. "He has driven away the seals and the fish by which we live! It may be that if we now take vengeance against you white men who have fallen into our hands, then the Snow Gods will send The Great One away!"

Roger and Lafe exchanged quick glances. They knew that superstition was deep-rooted among the Eskimos. Already the Chuhmajuks were closing in menacingly.

"Hold!" cried Roger commandingly. "Hearken to me, Chuhmajuks! Let us make a bargain! You have tried to trap and kill The Great One, and you have failed! You prepared a gun-trap, so that you might get warning when The Great One came ashore from time to time! Where you have failed, I will succeed! I will rid you of this giant walrus, and in return you will give us dogs so that we may quickly carry our injured chief to the ship which awaits us!"

The Eskimo Chief sneered.

"You may try, stupid white man!" said Rakka with an ugly laugh. "But if you fail, our vengeance will be swift and sure!"

BATTLING WITH "THE GREAT ONE"

NEVER in his life had Roger Stone been more conscious of the passing minutes than he was during the next two hours.

He sat outside an igloo in the village, working swiftly with his knife. He was shaping a thick length of whalebone about two feet long, tapering it at each end. At his feet lay a broad slat of wood from a sledge, a long and very strong coil of thin rope, and part of a broken harpoon.

Lafe Ericksen paced up and down, his face taut with anxiety.

"You'll never do it, Roger!" Lafe said hopelessly. "If they would let us borrow a rifle each, then we might kill the walrus. But—"

"Using a rifle is taboo," broke in Roger. "The Eskimos think The Great One was sent by the Snow Gods to punish them for trading with white men—and so they believe that they must not use the weapons of the white man to get rid of the walrus! In any case, I think this gadget I'm making will be a lot surer than a rifle. If we just shot the walrus and it sank, the Chuhmajuks might wait for days before letting us go, to make sure that it really was dead!"

"But what is that gadget you're making?" asked Lafe.

"A crossbow to fire a very short harpoon!" came the reply. "It's simple, but it will work! The whalebone strip is the bow. Fixed at right angles to its centre is the slat of wood. A leather thong is the bow-string, attached to the two tapered ends of the whalebone. You draw the thong back and loop it over this notch at the other end of the wood. It's just like a primitive crossbow!"

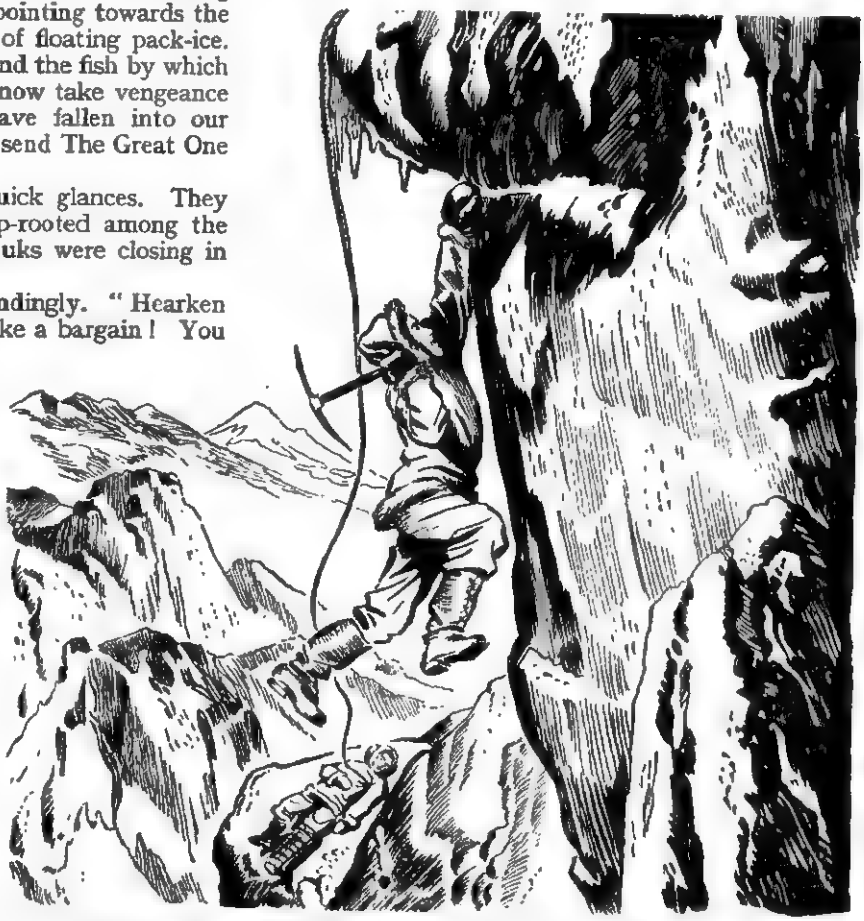
Lafe stared, a glint of hope coming into his eyes.

"The short harpoon lies in a groove in the wood," went on Roger, "and when you release the thong it drives the harpoon with terrific force."

It took two hours for Roger to complete his preparations, and throughout that time Rakka and a dozen more Eskimos watched him closely.

"You have sent men to the bay, as I asked?" Roger said to the Eskimo chief. "They have scattered lumps of whale-meat as bait to tempt The Great One?"

"The Great One will be waiting for you!" said Rakka, his little eyes mocking. "He is in the bay now. But he is cunning! You will not lure him on



Desperately using his ice-pick, Roger made his way up the side of the canyon. Upon his skill and courage depended the life of the leader of the expedition.

to the ice, white man! And no man can defeat The Great One in the sea!"

Fifteen minutes later, Roger stood with Lafe on the edge of the ice which bounded the bay. The frail little Eskimo craft known as a kayak bobbed on the water. The whole village had gathered to watch.

Roger sat down on the ground, lifted his feet, and put them against the centre of the whalebone bow where it was fixed to the slat of wood. Taking the leather thong of the bow in his hands, he used every ounce of his strength, pushing with his feet and pulling with his hands, to draw the thong back over the notch at the end of the wood. When he rose, he held in his hands a weapon of terrific power!

"Good luck, Roger!" said Lafe Ericksen hoarsley, and gripped his hand.

There was silence as Roger paddled the kayak out into the bay among the great floating slabs of ice.

Minutes passed, and then suddenly to his left Roger saw a gleam of something huge, black and glistening! Twenty yards away, a gleaming round head rose from the water, and Roger felt an icy tingle of awe flooding through him.

It was The Great One! A mighty bull walrus, of a size Roger had never thought to see even in a nightmare! One huge flipper slapped the water, and Roger glimpsed massive, gleaming tusks as the walrus rolled and snapped at a chunk of meat.

Bracing himself, Roger lifted the "crossbow." The stubby harpoon with its glittering steel barb lay along the groove, and the end of that thin but immensely strong coil of rope was fixed firmly to the haft of the harpoon. Steadying himself, Roger aimed carefully. His thumb eased the taut thong over the smooth notch which held it.

There came a deep-toned hum as the thick arc of the whalebone bow sprang straight! The short harpoon flashed through the air like a thunderbolt! The attached coil of line went snaking out across the waves!

Then—the harpoon struck home!

A bellowing roar echoed through the bay as the mighty walrus plunged down with the harpoon firm in its side.

"Got him!" gritted Roger with fierce triumph.

Balancing dangerously in the frail kayak, he began to take the strain on the line, so that he was playing the huge walrus as if it had been a fish!

The kayak dipped and rocked, moving jerkily this way and that under the fierce, underwater rushes of the maddened walrus. For five long minutes the battle went on. On the ice-bound bank, Rakka and his men watched in awed silence.

And then, on the very edge of an ice-floe, the kayak nosed under the water—and sank! One final desperate plunge by the tethered walrus had pulled it down!

Roger felt the breath-snatching chill of the water closing about him. Fiercely he threshed towards the ice-floe and dragged himself up. One hand was still clamped like a vice on the end of the line. He mustn't let go!

Numbed by the bitter cold, he lay panting on the smooth surface of the ice-floe. Then with an effort he got to his knees. At that moment he heard a queer snorting sound some yards behind him, and with it there came a great cry of warning from Lafe Ericksen on the shore. Roger turned his head.

The Great One was clambering slowly on to the far edge of the ice-floe.

Roger saw the deep-buried harpoon against the walrus's sleek black fur. He heard the slither of flippers and saw the gleam of tusks as the massive bull walrus shuffled relentlessly towards him, the line trailing behind it over the edge of the floe.

The Great One was weak and wounded—but still dangerous! And by instinct it knew that this human was its enemy!

Roger's hand closed on the bone-handled knife at his belt. Cold and exhaustion seemed to have drained the strength from him. With a fierce effort of will, he summoned up his last reserves of strength.

"Come on then!" he croaked hoarsely, as if the walrus could understand. "Let's get it finished one way or the other!"

The mighty walrus was almost upon him now. Desperately, Roger lurched sideways and struck with a keen-bladed knife at the monster.

A massive weight bore him down with crushing force! He twisted, striking again and again until at last his strength failed and he could no longer wrench the knife free.

Slowly he became aware that the cold wet bulk which lay across him, pinning him down, was silent and unmoving! In the last few seconds he had snatched victory from defeat! The giant walrus was dead!

The Great One would bring ruin to the bay of the Chuhmajuks no more!

* * * *

It was a full twenty-four hours later when Roger awoke from the deep sleep of exhaustion in his bunk on the survey ship several miles from the Eskimo village and his battle with the giant walrus!

Lafe was gently shaking his shoulder, and as Roger sat up blinking, the Norwegian put a steaming cup of coffee into his hands.

"Thanks," said Roger muzzily. "Martin Craig. Is he all right, Lafe? Is Martin all right?"

"He's fine," said Lafe, smiling. "The doctor has got everything under control, and says Martin will soon be up and about. But we were only just in time!"

"Thank goodness for that!" breathed Roger. "And thank goodness the Chuhmajuks kept their promise and helped us on our way."

"You're a hero to them!" grinned Lafe. "You were too exhausted to know much of what went on when the Eskimos brought you off that ice-floe. But believe me, the Chuhmajuks are no longer hostile to white men after what you did for them! They'll have fish in plenty from now on. By the way, Rakka, their chief, gave me a little present for you—a sort of trophy that'll always remind you of that amazing battle amid the ice-floes."

He lifted his hands, and Roger found himself staring at two long and wicked-looking tusks—the tusks of a giant bull walrus—The Great One!

THE Black Pirate OF Hu-KONG

By Edwin Dale

THE MUSICAL PIGEONS!

THE strangest music I have listened to was made by a flock of pigeons. And, although I didn't know it at the time, that music was intended to be the last I ever heard!

I was supposed to hear the music of the pigeons—and then die shortly afterwards. I escaped this novel form of murder, of course, or I wouldn't be telling you this story now. But I got away only by the skin of my teeth.

Before I go any further I'd better tell you something about myself. It won't be much; in fact, I cannot even tell you who I am. I go about the world sticking my neck into trouble—and liking it! I get into lots of exciting adventures, but if I revealed my name, it might have serious consequences for other people. That is why I'm known as "Mr. X"!

Now to continue my story:

Murder by musical pigeons! It was planned in that land of mystery and intrigue, where many inquisitive men have vanished—China!

I was in Hu-Kong, an island off the China coast, trying to get to grips with the Black Pirate—a sinister and illusive gentleman whom everybody else in Hu-Kong was trying to avoid.

He and his band were modern pirates—with modern methods. These methods were making him rich!

Here's how I became interested in him.

A British shipping firm received a letter addressed to its managing-director. It was elaborately headed: "The B.P. Self-Help Society." The "B.P." stood for Black Pirate. It was an amazing letter.

> "This Society has been formed to protect British shipping in the Ruby River area. We are now short of funds and we have decided to collect protection fees for all your ships passing through here. The charge per ship will be £1,000. If you do not wish your ships to be attacked by pirates then, each time one of them uses the Ruby River, send a messenger wearing a 'rain hat' into the Hu-Kong Bazaar with the money wrapped in newspapers."

Sheer blackmail—and colossal cheek! What the letter actually meant was that unless the shipping company paid over £1,000 for each ship trading in the area, it would be held up by pirates!

This shipping company invited me to tackle the problem—and I agreed.

By a round-about way I learnt that the only man in all Hu-Kong who was likely to be able to tell me anything at all about the Black Pirate was a certain merchant called Fang Wu—the richest mandarin on the island.

Mr. X Used Pigeons and a Monkey to Solve a Strange Mystery

He lived in a big house, situated in its own expansive grounds on one bank of the Ruby River. I decided that, because the Black Pirates' spies were everywhere, I would visit him disguised as a Chinese coolie. I would shun all doors and gateways, and approach Fang Wu's house through its maze of mimosa-clad gardens, after scaling the lofty wall which completely surrounded the entire estate.

At length I found myself within a stone's throw of Fang Wu's immense palace-like home with its countless up-turned roof corners—each one a finger pointing upwards.

It was then, crouching upon the fringe of a little forest of flowering mimosa, that I heard the music of the pigeons for the first time.

And it was then, parting the leaves in front of me, that I caught my first glimpse of the great and illustrious Fang Wu.

THE TREE-TOP SPY

ARRAYED in gorgeous silks, the rich merchant was standing upon a velvet stretch of lawn, releasing his pigeons, one at a time. His face was as inscrutable as the face of a Sphinx, and the colour of old parchment. His age could have been anything from 30 years to a 100.

There were some 50 pigeons either winging above his head, or upon the grass around his feet, patiently awaiting a signal from him. From those in the air sweet music came: from each one, as Fang Wu released it, arose a fresh note to add to the fascinating sound of this winged orchestra.

I had heard of these musical pigeons before—but now, hearing them for the first time, I was almost spellbound.

Small flutes, about 4 inches long, are attached to the backs of the pigeons, so that in flight, the rush of air produces musical notes. By releasing the birds at various intervals, their owner can play a tune.

Fang Wu was actually amusing himself—or so I believed at that moment—by playing a haunting, doleful tune with his highly trained pigeons.

I was enjoying his unusual performance, when—

A little monkey, chattering loudly, shot from out of the bushes almost above my head!

The music of the pigeons ceased abruptly, and they all swooped back to earth. The monkey leapt on to Fang Wu's shoulder. And Fang Wu turned in a calm matter-of-fact way to the thick bush behind which I was hidden.

"The honourable Mr. X may now come into the presence of the worthless Fang Wu," he lisped. "The song of welcome to you from my birds is finished!"

Astonished, I emerged from my hiding-place. I had taken great precautions to make sure that I had not been followed when I had slipped out of the rear of my hotel disguised as a coolie. And Fang Wu knew me, and where I was hiding!

Fang Wu watched my approach across the lawn, his face expressionless.

"Your disguise is velly clever, Mr. X," he said. "But I have been expecting you."

"Expecting me?" I echoed. "How do you know who I am?"

"To be a successful merchant in Hu-Kong," answered Fang Wu, "one must know everything—including the business that brought you here. You want me to tell you where you can find the Black Pirate?"

"Yes," I nodded eagerly. "Do you know his whereabouts?"

"The wise man knows nothing that it is not wisdom to know!" replied the merchant. "My advice to you, Mr. X, is to go back to the shipping company that sent you, and tell them that it is better to pay the Black Pirate. Good-bye!"

I decided to go back a different route to the way that I had come, just in case the Black Pirate's spies had seen through my disguise and had trailed me to Fang Wu's house. That should cut out the possibility of my walking into a trap.

This time, with the aid of a tall tree, I climbed the wall surrounding Fang Wu's vast estate where it bordered the Ruby River. As soon as I was over the other side, having used the leaves of the tree to hide me from the view of several junks moored along the river bank, I dropped quickly down into cover.

And then—

Squatting in an evil-looking crouch upon the top of the wall, staring down at me, was Fang Wu's pet monkey!

I recalled how it had leapt suddenly from out of the bush above my head on to Fang Wu's shoulder while I had been watching the musical pigeons. Evidently it had been trailing me at the instruction of one of the Black Pirate's spies. I must have been followed by it when I had left the shipping office that morning and had returned to my hotel to adopt my coolie disguise. Then it had accompanied me to Fang Wu's home.

Perhaps Fang Wu was the Black Pirate!

I started to creep away when I suddenly heard an angry chattering above my head. Looking up I saw the monkey speeding upwards towards the tree-top. I halted, sensing that the monkey's change of tactics was a move which was putting me into some acute danger.

And I was right!

Barely a minute later I heard it again—the murder music of the pigeons, as I afterwards knew it to be.

The next moment the air above my head was full of Fang Wu's pigeons. The whole flock was there, with their flutes piping away full blast.

And, just below them, was the monkey, leaping up and down upon a topmost bough of the tree. Clearly the little brute was calling the pigeons, and they had been trained to answer its call.

I needed no telling that the pigeons were circling up there to attract the attention of the Black Pirate's spies and cut-throats who happened to be near.

WHO IS THE BLACK PIRATE?

YOU can bet that I was anxious to get away from the sound of that now hateful music from overhead.

But even as I started off through the bushes I saw dozens of murderous-looking Chinamen pouring

ashore from the junks moored to the narrow bank—some in front and some behind me. Many were staring towards the birds—and all were armed with daggers, curved swords or cudgels!

I was completely cut off—and in one of the tightest corners of my life.

The Black Pirate's cut-throats spotted me, and closed in from all sides.

Seconds later I was fighting madly against terrific odds. For a while I was able to keep the yellow horde at bay with my revolver, but when it was empty there was no time for me to reload.

I snatched up a double-edged sword from a wounded pirate sprawled at my feet. Planting my back to the wall, I swung it madly from side to side, determined to sell my life dearly.

I fought until my arms ached—fought grimly until I had scarcely sufficient strength left in my arms to wield the heavy double-edged sword.

Then, just when I thought that the end must be at hand, a reprieve came from the most unexpected quarter of all. A commanding voice rang out in Chinese from the high prows of the largest of the junks moored to the bank:

"Stand back from the miserable British spy! It will give me great pleasure to kill him myself!"

Awed whispers swept through the ranks of the evil Chinese.

"It is the Black Pirate!"

"Our great master is with us!"

In the lull in the fighting I flashed a swift glance up towards the deck of the junk. Standing there, towering high above me, was a menacing figure, adorned from head to foot in black, with a black mask concealing his yellow face.

Tucked under one arm was the butt of a tommy-gun—its muzzle pointing straight at me. The Black Pirate was only waiting for his cut-throats to give him a clear view of me, so that his yellow finger could squeeze the trigger!

I must admit that, even when my life was hanging by a single slender thread, it was a shock to me to see the Black Pirate standing there upon the junk—for I had completely made up my mind that Fang Wu was the notorious pirate chief!

Then the Chinese river gangsters began hurrying away from me. In a flash I realised that the one thing that I must not do was to permit them to leave a clear space between me and the Black Pirate's gun.

Summoning my last ounce of strength, I charged into the pirates' midst, swinging the huge sword from side to side, as I followed them closely towards the river bank.

The river was now my one hope of life—if it could be called a hope. For, even if I reached it, the moment my head re-appeared above the surface I would be an easy victim for the Black Pirate's tommy-gun.

Suddenly, when I was still several yards from the river bank, the tommy-gun opened fire with a spiteful roar. The pirates in front of my swinging sword began dropping to the ground like corn before a scythe. The Black Pirate was ruthlessly shooting down his own men in order to clear a path to me for his bullets!

The three Chinamen intended to hand over Mr. X to the Black Pirate. But the famous adventurer was not the sort to be taken easily. Powerful blows from his fists sent the yellow men flying.

Ducking low, I darted sidelong through the pirates' legs in a last desperate bid to reach the river bank.

Somehow I managed to gain it, as I did so I saw a boat drifting by beneath me, a few yards from the steep river bank.

It was a boat of the type seen by the hundred along the waterfront—used chiefly for carrying supplies and light cargoes out to junks at anchor. They are frail, and shaped something like a punt, with their flat ends rising high out of the water.

Upon the high end of this boat, farthest from me, there was an empty barrel—and the sight of it gave me a sudden idea.

I took a flying, feet first, leap towards the nearest end of the boat. Tommy-gun bullets screamed

spitefully through the air all around me from the Black Pirate's deadly gun, but I was lucky. None of the bullets had my name on.

Crashing down upon the upturned front of the boat, I jerked it sharply down beneath the surface. As it plunged into the water I saw, just as I had anticipated, that the empty barrel at the other end of the long boat had been flung into the air, and was turning slowly over as it fell towards the river.

The front of the boat came up, and I used it as a springboard to dive head-first into the water. Bullets sprayed around me.

When I came up for breath after swimming underwater, I was underneath that upturned barrel, which was now floating bottom-upwards, three-parts submerged beneath the surface. There was just enough breathing space for me between the surface of the water and the bottom of the barrel.

I heard the Black Pirate order boats to be launched to search for me. For half-an-hour I heard the splashing of oars, as small boats cut through the water all around me.

At last to my immense relief I heard the Black Pirate call off the search, saying that it was evident that one of his bullets must have killed me as I leapt from the bank.

Another half-hour passed, during which I heard the rattle of anchor chains. Emerging at last from under my floating hiding-place, I saw the fleet of private junks sailing away down the wide jungle-bordered Ruby River.

I had escaped!

Looking back as I headed along the river bank towards Hu-Kong, I saw that I had a pursuer upon my trail. I had caught a momentary glimpse of Fang Wu's pet monkey scampering along the top of the tall wall after me.

The sight of the little brute gave me an idea as to how I could bring about the downfall of the Black Pirate!

KIDNAPPED!

WHEN I called at the shipping office that evening to make my report to its managing-director, an official informed me that neither I, nor anyone else, could see him. During my absence he had been kidnapped by the Black Pirate!

I had guessed that the kidnapped man was aboard the Black Pirate's junk. Quickly I questioned the official about the kidnapping.

A short while after I'd left that morning, a note from the B.P. Self-Help Society had arrived at the office. It stated that as the shipping company had been very unco-operative, the society had been forced to take the company's managing-director for a little holiday. In other words, they'd kidnapped him. A fee of £20,000 was asked to ensure the safe return of the director.

The company's messenger, with the £20,000 wrapped in newspapers, was to present himself at the foot of a certain flight of harbour steps at 9 o'clock the following morning. The messenger must wear a "rain hat."

If the money was not paid, then the company's managing-director would never be heard of again!

"We shall have to admit defeat, Mr. X!" shrugged the unhappy official, "and pay up this money."

"All right," I said. "Have the money, together with a 'rain hat' ready at 8.30 to-morrow morning, and I'll come along here and collect them both."

The solemn-faced officials gathered with me in the shipping company's Board Room stared.

"You mean, Mr. X," gasped one of them, "that you are going to be the messenger and take the ransom money to the Black Pirate?"

I nodded.

"And bring it back here again with me," I answered, "together with your managing-director—I hope! You will either see us back here by to-morrow night—or neither of us. Now, at the Naval Barracks here in Hu-Kong is a company of Commandos in training. I want to see their commander. Could you arrange for him to come here?"

The Commando leader arrived soon afterwards, and we had a long and interesting talk.

Later that night, on my way back to my hotel, I bought a stout iron cage. I felt certain that, at odd intervals throughout the night, I would receive a visitor who would peep in at my bedroom window to make sure that I was still there.

Making some alterations to the cage, I placed it above my open bedroom window. Turning out the light, I settled down upon the side of my bed to wait, with one end of a piece of stout cord twisted around the knuckles of one hand. The other end was attached to the cage.

One hour, two hours passed slowly by and then I saw two pin-points of yellow light gleaming at me from the window-sill. I gave the cord in my hand a sharp jerk.

There was a crash and a clatter—and then an angry chattering. When I switched on my bedroom light it was to see that the cage had dropped down, as I had intended, over the window-sill, and its door had closed—trapping a savage little prisoner inside it.

I had captured Fang Wu's monkey!

I lifted the cage into the room. For an hour or so the little monkey behaved like the savage demon that it was, hurling itself against the stout bars of the cage. Then, exhausted, it paused to take a drink of some water which I had thoughtfully poured into a container in the floor of the cage.

It took a long drink—and went almost instantly off to sleep. For I had doped the water with a harmless drug which I knew would put it to sleep until well after nine o'clock the next day.

The next morning I, disguised as a Chinese messenger, complete with a large rain hat and a parcel of dollar bills wrapped in newpapers, kept the appointed rendezvous at the foot of the harbour-steps.

In a small leather bag under my shirt was Fang Wu's drugged monkey.

A motor-boat manned by three murderous-looking Chinamen nosed its way to the foot of the steps.

"Give the parcel here," growled the man at the helm, "and be on your way!"

I shook my head vigorously.

"Those are not my orders!" I said in Chinese.

" I am being paid well for what I do, and I am the descendant of honest ancestors upon whom I will bring no shame. I have been told to place this parcel into the hands of no one but the Black Pirate himself —and I am to bring back with me the kidnapped Britisher."

The three Chinamen held a brief conference in whispers and then the leader looked up at me.

" Come aboard," he said. " And it is probable that your honourable ancestors will soon be rewarding you by telling you to your face that you have brought no shame upon them."

A short while later we were chugging down the Ruby River in the direction in which I had seen the fleet of pirate junks disappear the previous night !

INTO ACTION WITH THE COMMANDOS

DURING the course of our journey we slowly overtook or passed many stately junks plying their lawful trade up and down river. I took particular notice of three of them, which fortunately did not interest the three pirates on the motor-boat. These junks were fitted with auxillary engines which enabled them to keep at the same distance behind us, and follow us faithfully down the many tributaries along which the motor-boat twisted its way.

Before long I felt a squirming movement against the small of my back, and I knew that Fang Wu's pet monkey was recovering from the drug.

At last, not very far from Hu-Kong, we came to our journey's end. I was marched for a hundred yards or so down a narrow footpath through the jungle until at length I found myself climbing some stone stairs leading up to a derelict monastery.

Once, at the summit of the steps, I glanced back and caught a glimpse of the tall wall surrounding Fang Wu's estate, about half-a-mile away across the river.

And then I found myself face to face with the masked Black Pirate. For a moment I stared beyond him, not attempting to hide a shudder of horror.

At the Black Pirate's back there was an enormous stone dragon, glaring down at us with gaping jaws wide open. Stretched across the sharp-pointed teeth of the lower jaw was the man whose life I had come to buy, roped hand and foot. In front of the dragon there was a lever which I guessed the Black Pirate had only to pull to set the jaws into motion, and bring the upper teeth crushing down on to the shipping company's helpless managing-director.

The Black Pirate took the bundle of notes eagerly from my hands.

" When the illustrious Black Pirate has counted them," I lisped, " he will set his prisoner free and take us both back to Canton ? "

" When I have counted them," sneered the ruthless pirate leader, " you will join my prisoner on his bed of death, and I shall demand another protection fee of the same amount as before to buy the lives and liberty of you both ! "

This was exactly the double-cross that I had been expecting—and I acted without a moment's hesitation. Turning sharply, I sent my three escorts reeling and sprinted down the stone stairs.

A peel of mocking laughter followed me into the jungle.

" Let the frightened fox run for his hole ! " shouted the Black Pirate. " He is worthless to me—I still have the prisoner for whose life I can extort much more money ! "

He little knew. Twenty yards from the monastery I dropped into cover in the jungle, and, slipping the leather bag from the small of my back, released Fang Wu's pet monkey.

The little brute at once scampered up the tallest tree that it could find, and there began leaping angrily up and down upon a topmost branch—in just the same manner that it had done the previous day.

Ten minutes dragged slowly by—and then I heard once again, this time as welcome music, the music of Fang Wu's pigeons.

Staring up towards the tree-tops I saw the whole flock of fully 50 pigeons circling above me with their silver flutes sending penetrating music down into the jungle—and towards the nearby river.

Suddenly I heard the Black Pirate's angry voice.

" That messenger who escaped ! " he ranted. " He can be none other than the British spy whom I believed to be dead—Mr. X ! Capture him quickly—you will find him beneath where the pigeons circle ! "

Barely a minute later I heard the pirate horde crashing through the jungle towards me. And then I heard another and more welcome crashing through the undergrowth, coming from the direction of the river.

The next moment two hundred burly British Commandos burst through the jungle—to make short work of rounding up the pirate gang. My instructions, given the previous evening in the shipping office to their commander, had been for the Commandos to follow the pirate's motor-boat in these junks, and then, when it landed me ashore somewhere, to listen for the music of flutes. When they heard this they were to make a lightning attack, in true Commando fashion, upon the jungle from where the music came.

During the brief fight that followed I caught a fleeing glimpse of a figure in black. In a flying tackle, I brought the Black Pirate to the ground !

Kneeling upon his chest I eagerly tore the black mask from his yellow face—to expose the features of Fang Wu !

And so, you see, my hunch had been right throughout—the rich Chinese merchant, whose advice I had sought, was the Black Pirate !

I later discovered how Fang Wu had appeared as the Black Pirate so soon after I'd met him at his home on the previous day.

A secret underground tunnel ran from his house to the river bank, beside which were moored his pirate junks.

The Black Pirate's reign of terror was over at last. No longer would his junks prey on helpless ships.

And d'you know, I can't help chuckling every time I think of how I outwitted that cunning pirate leader with a trick he himself had taught his pet monkey and pigeons !

THE LAD WHO BEAT THE BUSHRANGERS!

By JACK MAXWELL

IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF THE AUSTRALIAN BUSHRANGERS. RUTHLESS BANDS OF THEM ROAMED THE COUNTRY, RAIDING AND LOOTING THE SHEEP STATIONS, ROBBING THE CATTLEMEN, AND BURNING DOWN THE HOMESTEADS OF ALL WHO DEFIED THEM. THE MOST DREADED OF THE BUSHRANGERS WERE THE INFAMOUS NED KELLY GANG. WEARING HOME-MADE BOILER-PLATE ARMOUR, THEY HAD ESTABLISHED A REIGN OF TERROR IN THE WOMBAT HILLS DISTRICT. ONE MORNING, THEY DESCENDED ON THE SHEEP STATION OWNED BY OLD CLIVE ARCHER; AND CLIVE AND HIS MEN DIDN'T MEAN TO GIVE IN TO THEIR DEMANDS WITHOUT A FIGHT

WE'LL LARN CLIVE ARCHER THAT IT DOESN'T PAY TO DEFY US. BURN THE PLACE DOWN

KEEP BACK, YOU LOT O' BUSH RATS! I'LL SEE THAT YOU DON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS, KELLY!

DESPITE THE GALLANT FIGHT PUT UP BY THE STATION HANDS, THEY WERE OVERWHELMED BY THE KELLY GANG. WITH OLD CLIVE ARCHER WOUNDED, THE BUSHRANGERS FORCED THEIR WAY INTO THE HOMESTEAD AND FOUND THE SHEEP FARMER'S LIFE-SAVINGS

YOU'VE GOT THE MONEY? NOW WE'LL CLEAR OUT

YOU THINK YOU'RE SMART, KELLY--BUT YOU'LL MEET YOUR MATCH BEFORE LONG

MEANWHILE, DICK ARCHER, SON OF OLD CLIVE, RETURNING FROM REPAIRING THE BOUNDARY FENCES, NOTICED DENSE SMOKE IN THE DISTANCE

I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THAT. IT SEEMS TO BE COMING FROM THE HOMESTEAD

FEARING THE WORST, DICK URGED HIS HORSE INTO A GALLOP, AND SOON REACHED THE HOMESTEAD--OR WHAT WAS LEFT OF IT

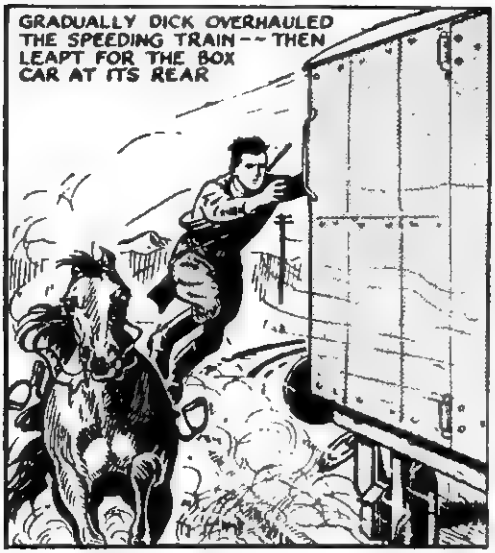
THIS IS THE WORK OF THE KELLY GANG, LAD. THEY'VE MADE OFF WITH EVERY PENNY WE'D SAVED. WE'RE RUINED!

PHEW! BAD NEWS, DAD. BUT I'M NOT STANDING FOR THIS. I'M GOING AFTER 'EM RIGHT NOW

LEAVING THE STATION HANDS TO LOOK AFTER HIS FATHER, DICK TOOK UP THE TRAIL OF THE RUTHLESS BUSHRANGERS. THE PRINTS OF THEIR HORSES' HOOVES WERE PLAINLY TO BE SEEN
I CAN'T BE FAR BEHIND THEM, AND WITH THAT HEAVY ARMOUR TO CARRY, THEIR HORSES WILL SOON TIRE. NED KELLY ISN'T KEEPING THE ARCHER MONEY FOR LONG!
WHEN ABOUT TO CROSS A RAVINE, ONE OF THE KELLY GANG PEERED BACK ALONG THE TRAIL
SOMEONE'S AFTER US, NED. I RECKON IT'S DICK ARCHER
DON'T WORRY, HE'LL GET NO FARTHER THAN THIS
DICK REACHED THE RAVINE WITHIN A FEW MINUTES. BUT---
THE CUNNING SNAKES! THEY GOT ACROSS O.K.--BUT THEY DON'T MEAN ME TO FOLLOW!
SORRY TO LEAVE YOU STRANDED, YOUNG ARCHER. HA, HA, HA!
SEETHING WITH ANGER, DICK WHIPPED UP HIS RIFLE AND FIRED. INSTEAD OF HITTING THE BUSHRANGER, THE BULLET CUT CLEAN THROUGH THE STRAP WHICH FASTENED A BAG TO THE MAN'S SADDLE
THE GANG QUICKLY VANISHED, NOT REALISING THAT THE BAG HAD FALLEN OVER THE EDGE OF THE RAVINE, AND THAT DICK HAD DECIDED TO RECOVER IT!
YOU NEVER KNOW--THERE MAY BE SOME USEFUL CLUE IN IT
AFTER A PERILOUS CLIMB, DICK MANAGED TO GRASP IT
HE CLAMBERED BACK TO THE TOP OF THE RAVINE AND OPENED THE BAG. AMONG VARIOUS ODDS AND ENDS IN IT WAS A NOTE-BOOK CONTAINING EXTRACTS FROM A RAILWAY TIME-TABLE
BUNDA CREEK TO JERILDERIE
BUNDA CREEK 1-30
QUEEN'S HALT 1-47
WOMBATSTOWN 2-26
X MOOMBURRA 3-17
WESTON 4-4
JERILDERIE 6-51
BRIDGE 3-30.

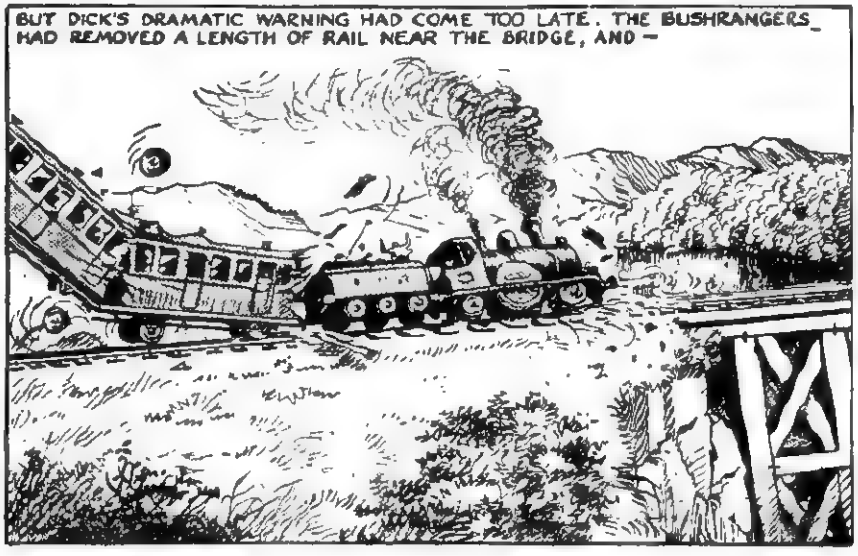
THE 1-30 FROM BUNDA CREEK! THAT'S THE TRAIN THAT TAKES THE GOLD FROM THE DIGGINGS TO THE BANK AT JERILDERIE!
IT LOOKS AS IF THE KELLY GANG MEAN TO STAGE A HOLD-UP AT THE BRIDGE BEYOND MOOMBURRA. NOW IF I CAN RIDE TO MOOMBURRA STATION IN TIME TO CATCH THE TRAIN, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO SAVE THE GOLD -- AND ORGANISE A PARTY TO CAPTURE THEM!

DICK RODE FURIOUSLY TO THE STATION -- ONLY TO FIND THAT THE TRAIN WAS JUST PULLING OUT. DESPERATELY HE SPURRED HIS HORSE AFTER IT
MOOMBURRA
£1000 REWARD
NED KELLY



YARD BY YARD DICK MADE HIS WAY ALONG THE TOP OF THE SWAYING, LURCHING TRAIN. WITHIN A FEW MINUTES IT WOULD REACH THE BRIDGE WHERE THE KELLY GANG WOULD BE WAITING IN AMBUSH. BUT BEFORE THEN, DICK MEANT TO ENSURE THAT THE ATTACK WOULD FAIL, AND THAT THE BUSHRANGERS WOULD BE ROUNDED UP!

THE GUARD OF THE TRAIN GOT THE SHOCK OF HIS LIFE WHEN DICK SUDDENLY CAME SWINGING THROUGH THE WINDOW
WHAT THE--
PUT YOUR BRAKES ON! THE KELLY GANG ARE STAGING A HOLD-UP AT THE NEXT BRIDGE! THEY'RE AFTER THE GOLD FROM THE DIGGINGS!



SPRINGING FROM THEIR AMBUSH, THE KELLY GANG OPENED FIRE

SHOOT TO KILL! WE'LL LEAVE NO WITNESSES TO SQUEAK ABOUT US

ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE PASSENGERS FIRED BACK, DICK KNEW THAT ONLY A FORCE OF TROOPERS COULD NOW BEAT THE BUSHRANGERS. SUCH HELP COULD BE OBTAINED BY THE STATION MASTER AT MOOMBURRA -- ONCE HE KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING! HOW COULD DICK LET HIM KNOW? HE SOON HIT ON AN IDEA. HE WOULD UNCOUPLE THE REAR BOX CAR AND LET IT RUN DOWN THE INCLINE BACK TO MOOMBURRA. THE BULLET MARKS ON IT WOULD TELL THEIR OWN STORY

DESPERATELY DICK STRUGGLED WITH THE COUPLINGS

I'VE GOT TO WORK FAST. IF THOSE DINGOES SPOT ME, MY NUMBERS UP

ALL AT ONCE DICK WAS SEEN BY ONE OF THE BUSHRANGERS

THERE'S YOUNG ARCHER, NED! HOW THE DEUCE DID HE GET HERE?

DON'T ASK QUESTIONS—SHOOT!

AS THE COUPLING CAME FREE AT LAST, DICK JERKED HIMSELF TO ONE SIDE. THIS SAVED HIS LIFE -- FOR A BULLET FROM A BUSHRANGER MISSED HIM BY HALF AN INCH! THEN, TAKING DICK WITH IT, THE BOX CAR BEGAN TO RUN BACKWARD

DICK CLAMBERED ON TO THE ROOF OF THE CAR, WITH A BUSHRANGER GALLOPING IN PURSUIT

WE'LL OPEN FIRE IN A SECOND. GEE -- I WISH I HADN'T DROPPED MY GUN!

EVEN NOW DICK WASN'T AT A LOSS. HE WAITED UNTIL THE BUSHRANGER WAS NEAR ENOUGH -- THEN TOOK A FLYING LEAP AT HIM!

YOU CRAZY FOOL! WHAT THE ---

IT'S YOUR HORSE I WANT -- NOT YOU, YOU RAT!

UNABLE TO KEEP HIS BALANCE, THE BUSHRANGER FELL HEADLONG--LEAVING DICK ON THE BACK OF THE HORSE!
WHOA, MY BEAUTY! CALM DOWN--THERE'S WORK TO BE DONE!

THE BUSHRANGER HAD FALLEN ON HIS HEAD, AND HAD BEEN KNOCKED UNCONSCIOUS. HAVING QUIETENED THE HORSE, DICK DISMOUNTED AND DARTED UP TO THE SENSELESS GANGSTER
THIS SORT OF ARMOUR HAS BEEN MIGHTY USEFUL TO THE KELLY GANG SO FAR. NOW'S MY CHANCE TO USE IT TO TRAP 'EM!

DICK BOUND AND GAGGED THE BUSHRANGER, DONNED THE ARMOUR, THEN MOUNTED HIS HORSE
I'LL NIP BACK TO THE BRIDGE AND PRETEND TO BE ONE OF THE GANG WITH LUCK I'LL BE ABLE TO JOIN THEM AND FIND OUT WHERE THEIR HIDE-OUT IS!

BY THE TIME DICK GAINED THE SCENE OF THE HOLD-UP, THE KELLY GANG HAD WON THE GUN-BATTLE AND WERE LOADING SACKS OF GOLD DUST AND NUGGETS ON TO THEIR HORSES. DICK REPORTED TO KELLY HIMSELF
I COULDN'T STOP THAT BOX CAR. BUT WE'LL BE WELL AWAY BEFORE ANY TROOPERS CAN TURN UP
THAT'S O.K. BRING THOSE TWO SACKS WITH YOU. ONE CONTAINS GOLD AND THE OTHER CORN FOR THE HORSES

SMILING GRIMLY BEHIND HIS IRON MASK, DICK PUT THE TWO SACKS ON TO HIS HORSE
MAKE IT SLIPPY, WE'VE GOT NO TIME TO WASTE
DON'T WORRY! I WON'T BE FAR BEHIND YOU!

DICK WAS JUST ABOUT TO RIDE AFTER KELLY WHEN THE GUARD OF THE TRAIN LEAPT INTO ACTION. THINKING DICK TO BE ONE OF THE GANG, HE FLUNG HIMSELF FORWARD
GOT YOU, YOU RAT! WE'LL HAVE AT LEAST ONE TO HAND OVER TO THE TROOPERS!

THE GUARD, HOWEVER, WAS NO MATCH FOR DICK. BUT THE YOUNG AUSSIE, WHILE PRETENDING TO HIT HIM, HISSED OUT A WARNING

I'M DICK ARCHER. PRETEND I'VE K.O.'D YOU, AND LIE STILL. I'LL FOLLOW THE GANG AND LEAVE A TRAIL THAT THE TROOPERS CAN PICK UP

COME ON! WE CAN'T WASTE TIME ON HIM!

DICK KNEW THAT KELLY WAS WATCHING, SO BROUGHT DOWN HIS GUN BUTT WITH A THUD. BUT HE MADE SURE THAT IT MISSED THE GUARD!

LIE STILL! FOR PETE'S SAKE DON'T LET KELLY SUSPECT ANYTHING. I'VE TO GET MOVING

BEFORE ANY OF THE PASSENGERS COULD STOP HIM, DICK LEAPT ON HIS HORSE AND RODE MADLY AFTER THE KELLY GANG

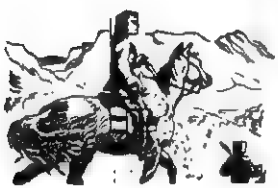
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

SURE, NED. CARRY ON!

AS DICK RODE IN THE WAKE OF THE GANG, HE TOOK OUT HIS KNIFE AND SLIT THE SACK OF CORN OVER HIS SADDLE

THIS CORN WILL LEAVE A PERFECT TRAIL FOR THE TROOPERS TO FOLLOW

THE KELLY GANG WERE NOTORIOUS FOR THE CLEVER WAY IN WHICH THEY CONCEALED THEIR TRACKS. NO MATTER WHAT THEY DID, HOWEVER, DICK ALWAYS KEPT TO THE REAR OF THE COLUMN, AND, UNNOTICED, DROPPED SOME CORN



EVENTUALLY THE KELLY GANG REACHED THEIR HIDE-OUT IN THE HILLS. IT WAS A LONELY ABANDONED HOMESTEAD

SO THIS IS THEIR SECRET HEADQUARTERS. GEE--I'D NEVER HAVE FOUND IT IF I HADN'T PUT THIS ARMOUR ON!

AFTER TETHERING THEIR HORSES, THE GANG BEGAN TO REMOVE THEIR ARMOUR. ONE OF THE MEN TURNED TO DICK
TAKE YOUR IRON OFF. THERE'S NOTHING TO BE SCARED OF HERE
GOSH! NOW I'M IN A SPOT. IF I DO AS I'M TOLD, I'LL BE RECOGNISED!

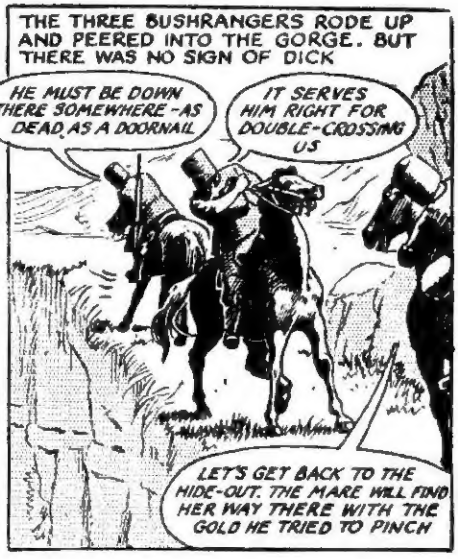
DICK'S BRAIN WORKED SWIFTLY. HE HAD GOT TO PREVENT THE BUSHRANGERS FROM DISCOVERING WHO HE WAS UNTIL THE TROOPERS HAD TIME TO FOLLOW THE TRAIL HE HAD LAID TO THIS SECRET HIDE-OUT IN THE HILLS. BUT IF HE DIDN'T REMOVE HIS HELMET, THE BUSH-RANGERS' SUSPICIONS WOULD BE AROUSED. WHAT COULD HE DO TO BLUFF THEM AND GAIN TIME ?

SUDDENLY DICK DUG IN HIS SPURS AND SENT HIS HORSE GALLOPING BACK THE WAY THEY HAD COME!
THUNDER! HE'S DOUBLE-CROSSING US—MAKING OFF WITH THE GOLD! AFTER HIM, LADS!

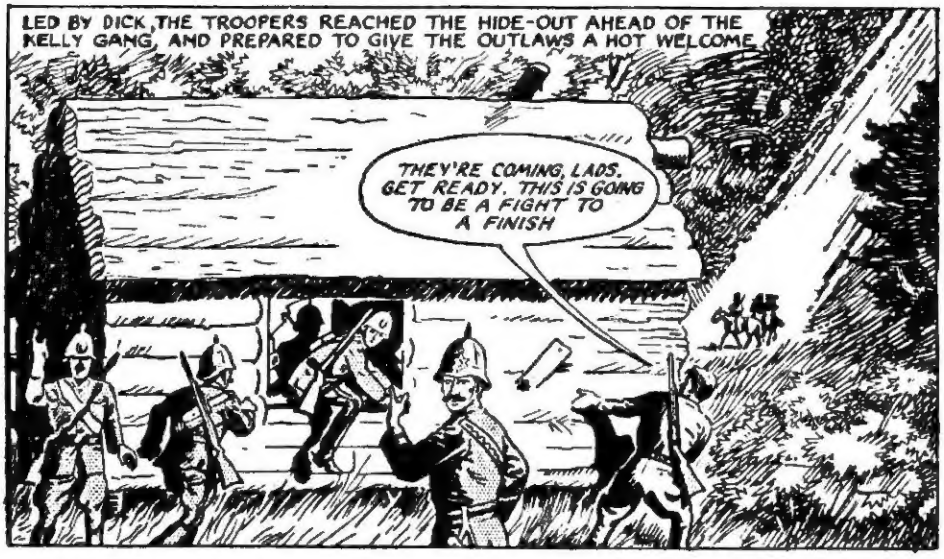
THE BUSHRANGERS FLUNG ON THEIR ARMOUR AND AT ONCE GAVE CHASE
HEAD HIM OFF! DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE!
WE'LL NAB HIM ALL RIGHT. HE'S MAKING FOR THE GORGE

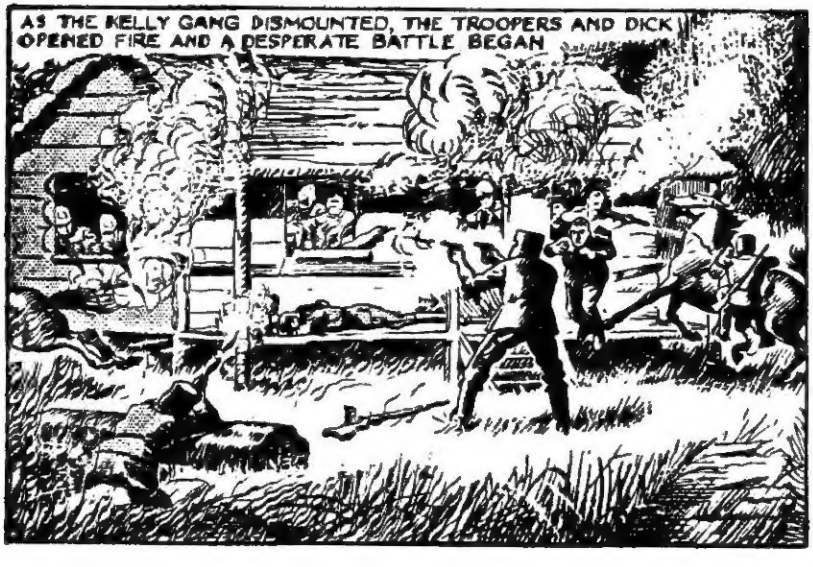
AS A BULLET STRUCK DICK'S LEG ARMOUR, HE DELIBERATELY HURLED HIMSELF FROM THE SADDLE
HE'S HIT! HE'S DOWN!
GOOD FOR YOU! WE'LL SOON HAVE HIM NOW

PROPPING UP THE ARMOUR, DICK FIRED FROM BEHIND IT TO HOLD OFF THE ATTACKING BUSHRANGERS
IF THEY ALL FIRE AT THIS, MY SCHEME SHOULD WORK OUT A TREAT!


THE THREE BUSHRANGERS RODE UP AND PEERED INTO THE GORGE. BUT THERE WAS NO SIGN OF DICK
HE MUST BE DOWN THERE SOMEWHERE -AS DEAD AS A DOORNAIL
IT SERVES HIM RIGHT FOR DOUBLE-CROSSING US
LET'S GET BACK TO THE HIDE-OUT. THE MARE WILL FIND HER WAY THERE WITH THE GOLD HE TRIED TO PINCH

NOT ONE OF THE BUSHRANGERS DREAMT THAT DICK WAS STILL ALIVE, AND THAT HE HAD CAUGHT THE HORSE. REMOUNTING, HE RODE TO THE TRAIL OF CORN HE HAD LAID, AND FOLLOWED IT IN THE DIRECTION OF THE SCENE OF THE TRAIN HOLD-UP. IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE HE SAW A POSSE OF TROOPERS COMING TOWARDS HIM. THEY'D PICKED UP THE CORN TRAIL NEAR THE BRIDGE


LED BY DICK, THE TROOPERS REACHED THE HIDE-OUT AHEAD OF THE KELLY GANG, AND PREPARED TO GIVE THE OUTLAWS A HOT WELCOME
THEY'RE COMING, LADS. GET READY. THIS IS GOING TO BE A FIGHT TO A FINISH



THE FIGHT DIDN'T LAST LONG. HAVING BEEN TAKEN COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE, THE BUSHRANGERS WERE SOON BEATEN. THE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE POSSE SHOOK DICK BY THE HAND
THIS IS THE END OF THE KELLY GANG, DICK -- THANKS MAINLY TO YOU. YOU'VE SAVED THE GOLD, RECOVERED YOUR FATHER'S LIFE-SAVINGS -- AND THE REWARD YOU'LL BE PAID WILL BE MORE THAN ENOUGH TO RESTORE THE BURNT-OUT HOMESTEAD. WELL DONE, MY LAD!

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Printed in England by Messrs. Percy Brothers, Ltd., Manchester, and published by the Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, England. Sole agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd.; for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd. This book may only be exported to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa by the Sole Agents

CADBURYS PUZZLE PICTURE

Here is a picture of Cadburys wonderful Factory in a Garden at Bournville. Six different things are hidden in it. Turn the picture all ways and see if you can spot them. Here are the things you have to find:—

1. The little African boy who lives on the Gold Coast where Cadburys cocoa beans grow.
2. The ship that brings the cocoa beans to Britain.
3. A cow that gives the milk for Cadburys delicious Milk Chocolate.
4. A cup of chocolatey Bournville cocoa.
5. A block of Cadburys Dairy Milk Chocolate.
6. The train that starts Cadburys Chocolate and Bournville Cocoa on their journey all over the world.

I want Cadburys!